A Little Maid of South Carolina

ALICE TURNER CURTIS

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OF
SOUTH
CAROLINA

CURTIS

JUNE BUSIED HERSELF WITH HER BOOK

A LITTLE MAID OF SOUTH CAROLINA

BY

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AUTHOR OF

"THE LITTLE MAID HISTORICAL BOOKS"

"YANKEE GIRL CIVIL WAR STORIES"

ILLUSTRATED BY

HATTIE LONGSTREET PRICE

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A Little Maid of South Carolina

CHAPTER I

A MISSING CAKE

JUNE LAMBERT stood on the wide upper gallery of her Grandmother Armstrong's house in Charleston, South Carolina; she was listening intently. From far down the wide pleasant street she could hear the sound of music—a gay march, played by a fife and drum that headed a small division of British soldiers.

June ran to the railing and leaned over, her dark curls moving in the fragrant air that swept over near-by gardens, and the folds of her pink dimity dress, with its rows of narrow ruffles, fluttering like the petals of a flower.

"Here they come, as if they owned everything," she whispered, a little note of anger in her voice, as she caught a glimpse of shining buttons and red coats. "They have passed St. Michael's."

At that moment there was a rush of steps across the gallery, and another girl, whose curls were as dark as June's and wearing a dress exactly like her cousin's, clasped June's arm and exclaimed: "'Tis Major Fraser, June. Perhaps he'll look up. He knows this is Grandma Armstrong's house. I'll wave to him!" And, leaning dangerously far over the railing, Millicent was about to flutter her handkerchief over the heads of the advancing soldiers when she was seized firmly and pulled backward, and heard her cousin exclaim:

"Millicent Armstrong! You ought to be ashamed! Waving at America's enemies!"

For it was the early summer of 1781, when the city of Charleston, South Carolina, had been held by the British troops under Sir Henry Clinton for over a year.

June Lambert, whose father was with the American troops under General Greene, and who had not yet reached her twelfth birthday, could well remember what had happened the previous year, when, on May 12th, 1780, the British, after a long siege, had taken possession of Charleston.

For a moment Millicent stared at her cousin as if too surprised to speak. The red-coated sol-

diers were now well past the house. The sound of the fife and drum grew fainter, and died away, as Millicent angrily announced:

"You are a rebel, June Lambert. Grandma Armstrong says 'tis a mercy you are nothing but a child or there is no knowing what you might do. And you ought to be ashamed of yourself, pulling me about as if I were a bundle," and Millicent smoothed her ruffled skirt, and brushed back her dark curls, as she looked angrily at her cousin.

But in a moment a smile crept about the corners of her mouth, and a dimple showed in her left cheek.

"Oh, June!" she exclaimed; "you do look so fierce! Like a wildcat."

"Wildcat!" repeated June. "You never saw a wildcat in your life, and 'tis not very polite to call your own cousin names," and, without a glance at Millicent, June turned and ran through the open door along the wide upper hallway, to the back stairs. She could hear Millicent hurrying after her, calling her name and bidding her to wait. But she did not stop, and was quickly racing along the latticed passageway that led to the kitchen, when a loud shriek from Millicent made her stop suddenly and look back.

"Oh, June! My skirt is caught on a nail in this old lattice. 'Tis torn straight down the side," wailed Millicent, as June turned quickly and came toward her. "Whatever will I do! And Grandma expecting company this very afternoon; and she said I might pass the cake."

"What cake?" questioned June as she carefully released the torn pink ruffle from the protruding nail.

"The fine cake Mandy made this morning," whimpered Millicent.

"Stop crying, Millie. You know Roselinda can mend your dress so 'twill never show, and Grandma will not know anything about it. What company is coming?" questioned June.

"General Balfour and another officer. That's why Grandma told us to put on our pink dresses and best slippers. Come and help me find Roselinda, June," and Millicent turned toward the house.

June shook her head. "No, there's no need of my coming. And you would best hurry, or your dress will not be mended before Grandma's company arrives," and June continued on her way to Mandy's kitchen, which occupied the lower floor of a square building at the end of the latticed passageway. Millicent, duly alarmed at the

danger of being discovered with a long rent in her pretty gown, ran off in search of the colored girl who looked after June and herself.

June now walked rather slowly. She was thinking of the " fine cake " that would be offered to the British soldiers, and remembering the American soldiers imprisoned in the cellar of the Exchange, known as the " Provost." It was a large single room; and the prisoners had scant rations and no comforts.

" 'Tis not fair," June whispered. For the past year, ever since she and her mother had been obliged to leave their plantation home on the Ashley River, and come to live with Grandmother Armstrong in Charleston, June had heard many stories of the hardships of these men and of those in the prison ships in Charleston Harbor. And more than once she had gone with her mother to carry needed comforts to the prisoners.

" Major Fraser is sure to come this afternoon, and he can have anything he wants," thought June, and at the door of Mandy's kitchen she made a firm resolve: in some way she would secure that cake intended for her grandmother's company, and carry it to the " Provost."

" There's sure to be citron in it," she thought,

as she stepped into the big kitchen with its wide open doors and windows.

"Wot yo' want, missie?" questioned Mandy; "didn' I make both yo' chillun a sugar doll yisterday? An' didn' I gib yo' both a dish ob honey wid yo' lunch? Wot yo' want?" and the big colored woman folded her arms and nodded her turbaned head, as if she were the owner of every bit of food in the pantries and storehouse; as indeed she felt she was.

"I don't want a single thing, Mandy. Truly I don't. All I want is just to look at the fine cake you have made for Grandma's company. I reckon those British officers don't know how good cake can be 'til they taste yours," June responded.

Mandy chuckled with satisfaction at this compliment.

"Well, Missie June, it be a fine cake shuh nuff. De frostin' ain't a-hardenin' up like it ought to; but dah's a good lot ob citron in dat cake, an' seven eggs, an' nigh a half-pound er butter, an'——"

"Oh, Mandy! Just let me look at it," pleaded June.

"'Tis settin' in de pantry, chile, near de winder, wid a big pan ober it. Yo' be mighty keer-

ful a-liftin' dat pan," cautioned the well-pleased Mandy. "I'd step 'long wid yo' but I'se got ter watch my bread."

In a moment June was in the big pantry beyond the kitchen, and quickly discovered the big pan under which the frosted cake stood. But she did not at once lift the pan. Instead of that she looked quickly along the shelves. Yes, there was the round basket with its strong handle. And instantly June reached after it and set it down beside the covered cake. Then, with great care, she lifted the pan and in a second the cake was safely in the basket, and the pan replaced over an empty plate.

A moment later June was leaning far out of the open window lowering the basket to the ground. "'Tis good luck the window is low," she thought, as she ran back to the kitchen. Mandy was peering into her oven, and June did not wait to again praise the cake.

"I must get that basket and hide it before anyone sees it," she thought, and, instead of entering the latticed passageway leading to the house, June ran along beside the cabin wall, picked up the round basket that she had lowered from the pantry window and turned quickly into a path sheltered by a high privet hedge.

"Oh! I don't know where to hide it," she whispered, and at the same moment she heard the sound of voices and approaching steps. To be discovered with Mandy's cake in her basket was not to be thought of, and the little girl looked about anxiously for some possible place of concealment. But the steps were now very near. June recognized her grandmother's voice, and at the same moment a swaying rose vine touched her face.

June reached up and broke off the end of the branch and thrust it into her basket, and quickly reached for another, and when her grandmother discovered her June's basket was heaped high with fragrant yellow roses.

"Why, June! I did not know you were out of doors," said Mrs. Armstrong, smiling at the little girl's flushed cheeks. "Are you gathering roses for my guests?" and turning to her red-coated companion she said: "Major Fraser, this is my little granddaughter, Miss June Lambert."

The major was holding his plumed hat in his left hand, and he bowed politely to the little girl, who was evidently too frightened at the encounter to remember her manners, for she stared at him without a word, and did not make the curt-

sey always required of little girls upon an introduction.

"We will turn here and walk back to the house. You would best come with us, June," said Mrs. Armstrong, with a glance of disapproval at her small granddaughter's failure in politeness.

But June did not notice this. She could think only of the rose-covered basket and the hidden cake. "If I only dared run," she thought, with a quick glance toward the high gates of beautifully wrought iron that shut in the garden of the Armstrong house.

The little girl walked as slowly as possible.

"Maybe Grandma will go into the house and forget about me," she thought hopefully. But as Mrs. Armstrong and Major Fraser reached the steps leading to the wide piazza they stopped and looked back, evidently waiting for June.

"You would best come in now, dear. Your face is flushed, and you know you should never go into the garden without a hat or parasol," said her grandmother. "You may call Roselinda to take your flowers and put them in water," she added, wondering why June, who was usually almost too ready to talk, was so silent.

As June slowly followed her grandmother

into the house and entered the large cool drawing-room, whose dark polished floor reflected the glimmer of the two big crystal chandeliers, and whose well-shaded windows shut out the warm rays of May sunshine, she gave a little exclamation of surprise. For there, beside one of the high-backed chairs stood Millicent, her pink dress apparently perfect in every way, her dark curls as smooth as silk and tied back with a wide pink ribbon. She was holding a huge doll, dressed in white, and as Millicent curtseyed she held the doll by its arm so that "Arabella Caroline," for that was the doll's name, seemed to curtsey also.

Mrs. Armstrong looked approvingly at Millicent. Here, she thought, was a grandchild who always did her credit, and she wondered why it was that June's curls were so seldom smooth, and why the little girl would never be friendly with the British officers who now and then came to the house.

Millicent smiled radiantly at her cousin. She had quite forgiven June for pulling her away from the balcony railing.

"Oh, June! You forgot to leave your basket in the hall," her grandmother reminded her. And instantly the little girl started toward the

door, again forgetting the many times she had been told not to leave a room without curtseying to visitors.

She darted across the hall to the open door, and ran down the path. Every moment she expected to hear Roselinda's voice calling her back. She sped past the fine house of Miles Brewton, where the English Colonel Balfour made his headquarters, and more than one person turned to look after the bare-headed little girl with a basket of yellow roses, who raced along the street as if pursued by an enemy.

Now she turned into Broad Street, and could see the Exchange Building looming before her. In its cellar was the dreaded "Provost," where the scantiest rations were doled out to the American prisoners. At the Provost entrance two British soldiers stood on guard, and the sight of them made June suddenly conscious of new difficulties.

"Whatever will I say to them? If I just give them the basket they will keep it for themselves," she thought, as she now slowly approached the guard. Then a little smile crept over her face. The roses completely hid the cake. It might well be the guards would not look beneath them;

and summoning all her courage June walked toward the man nearest the Provost entrance.

"If you please, I want to give these flowers to the American prisoners," she said, her voice faltering a little at the man's stern glance.

A few weeks earlier and anyone making such a plea would have been curtly refused. But during the spring of 1781, the citizens of Charleston had resolutely demanded that the imprisoned men should be treated with more decency. The ladies of the city, even those who declared themselves loyal to King George the Third, often sent food or garments for the prisoners; and the guards saw no harm in letting this little girl hand a basket of flowers through the Provost door; and the soldier pointed to the entrance, and bade the doorkeeper open the door wide enough for one of the prisoners to take the basket.

A gaunt face peered at her through the narrow opening. Seeing the roses his expression changed. "Why, little maid! 'Tis like the sunlight itself to see you and your roses," he exclaimed and other prisoners crowded about the doorway for a glimpse of June and the basket of flowers.

The guard at the door hardly noticed them. He was calling to another soldier on the steps of

the Exchange, bidding him to bring him tobacco. June handed the basket to the man who had spoken to her. "There's a cake under the roses. A cake with citron in it," she whispered, and there was a little murmur of applause.

At this sound the guard turned quickly.

"You'd best not stay, young miss," he warned June. "'Tis none too healthy hereabouts," and the little girl stepped back, and the heavy barred door swung to.

For a brief moment June peered through the bars. All the men save one had moved back into the vault-like enclosure to a place where they could divide the flowers and cake out of sight of the guard. But one man still lingered close to the door. "Little maid," he whispered, and June saw a bit of folded brown paper being thrust toward her through the bars.

"See that General Moultrie gets this," he whispered, and was gone.

June thrust the paper into her pocket and walked sedately away. She did not even glance up at the tall guards. All her mind and thoughts were centered on the folded brown paper in her pocket. The prisoner had asked her no questions. He had trusted her to prove his friend and to deliver his message; and as June

walked slowly along toward home she told herself that here perhaps was the chance she had hoped for to be of service to the cause for which her father was fighting.

"I'll have to go to Haddrell's Point," thought June, as she reached the gateway of her grandmother's home, for the Continental officers were confined there, having given their parole for the duration of the war.

To reach Haddrell's Point, a promontory separated from Charleston by the broad mouth of the Cooper River, would prove no easy matter for a girl of June's age.

"I reckon I ought to go right soon," she decided, and looked up to see Millicent, still holding the elegant "Arabella Caroline" by one arm, come running to meet her.

"Oh, June! What do you think! Mandy's cake was stolen! It surely was! Right out of the pantry window! There was only sugar cookies to offer Grandma's company. And Major Fraser just nibbled the edge of one," and Millicent giggled as if well pleased at the major's disappointment. "Wherever have you been, June? Your white stockings and your best slippers are all dust, and your face is dirty. And——"

But June did not wait to hear what else Millicent might have to say of her appearance.

"Millie, promise me not to say a word to Grandma about my having been outside the garden!" pleaded June. "Promise, and I will give you my locket!"

"Will you truly, June? Oh! I won't say a word, Junie. But you hurry and put on clean stockings and brush your hair. When will you give me the locket?"

"Now!" June replied, and Millicent ran along beside her, describing Mandy's surprise and Mrs. Armstrong's anger when it was discovered that the fine cake had disappeared.

"Who do you reckon took it, Junie?" she concluded, as they reached the pleasant upper chamber that they shared together.

CHAPTER II

THE LETTER

"HERE is the locket," continued June, opening the upper drawer of a small bureau that stood on one side of a long window which looked out over the garden. Another bureau exactly like it stood on the other side of the window, and contained Millicent's belongings.

Millicent, as well as June, was a visitor in her grandmother's house, but she had been there so long that she felt as if it were really her home. For it was nearly a year since her father and mother had sailed for England. And now their return was expected.

June held out a small round locket set with tiny pearls toward her cousin. It was attached to a slender gold chain. Just as the smiling Millicent was about to grasp it June held it beyond her reach.

"I'm not going to give it to you, Millie. I can't. It has my mother's picture in it. But you can wear it just as long as you don't say a word to Grandma about my running out of the garden to-day. Just the minute you tell you will

have to give it back," she declared, looking at her cousin a little questioningly, for Millicent was apt to forget a promise.

"But, Junie, I don't know where you went. Tell me," pleaded Millicent.

"I went to the——" June stopped suddenly. "Maybe I'll tell you sometime. But remember, Millie, if you say a word about my leaving the garden to-day you will have to give me back my locket," and, very reluctantly, she relinquished her clasp on her beloved locket, and the smiling Millie slipped the golden chain over her head.

"It really is mine, Junie, no matter what you say; for I sha'n't ever, ever, ever say a word about your running away. Why don't you tell me where you went, Junie?" pleaded Millicent. But June was apparently too busy brushing her curls, changing her stockings, and making herself tidy, to take notice of her cousin's question.

"Mother will be home to-morrow," she announced, with a quick glance in the long narrow gilt-framed mirror that hung over her bureau.

"Do you s'pose she will bring us presents?" questioned Millie, admiring the locket as it swung over her lace collar.

"Millicent Pinckney Armstrong, you are

always wanting people to give you presents. You ought to be ashamed!" declared June. "Of course my mother won't bring us anything from the Carter plantation. Why, General Balfour's Hessians carried off everything."

Millie looked at her cousin in surprise. "What makes you get cross so easy, June? I reckon you like presents just as well as I do. Anyway, when my mother and father come home they'll bring me lots of things," and Millicent sauntered out of the room leaving June to her own company.

Mrs. Lambert was away on a brief visit with friends on a plantation near her former home. Such visits were readily permitted by the British officers in command of Charleston at that time. And the fact that June's mother was the daughter of Mrs. Armstrong, whose sympathies were known to be with the British, made it an easy matter for Mrs. Lambert to come and go with but little supervision.

More than once on such visits she had carried some useful article that would prove of service to one of General Marion's troopers. For Mrs. Lambert did not share her mother's sympathy with the British. She was sure the American people were right in refusing to submit to the

unjust taxes imposed upon them by the English parliament, and in resenting the invasion of their homes by British troops, sent by King George the Third to enforce his demands.

The resistance of the American people began in Boston in May, 1774. And in July of the same year the people of Charleston, South Carolina, approved of Boston's "declaration of American rights," and volunteer companies were formed for the protection of the Colonies, although a majority of the citizens hoped for a reconciliation with the English government.

But, on the 19th day of April, 1775, war was declared upon the American people, by British troops firing upon the men of Lexington, Massachusetts. The news of this attack roused all the thirteen colonies to the defence of America.

Charleston became an armed camp and headquarters for supplies for the American troops. It was bravely defended against numerous attacks by the British. But after a long siege, in 1780, it was obliged to yield to superior forces.

But now, in the spring of 1781, the activities of General Marion, with his small band of volunteer troopers, encouraged loyal Americans to hope that the British might soon be driven from South Carolina.

When June followed her cousin down the broad staircase she was wondering if her mother might not have heard some new story of the valor and daring of Marion's men. She had for the moment forgotten the scrap of brown paper. But slipping her hand into the shallow pocket of her pink dimity dress her fingers touched it, and she gave a sudden start.

"However can I get to Haddrell's Point?" she thought anxiously. "If Mother was only here she would find a way to send it. But she isn't. I must find a way myself," and June's face was so sober and anxious that her grandmother felt sure the little girl was regretting her careless behavior that afternoon. Nevertheless, she decided that it must not pass unnoticed; and, as Millicent and June followed her into the dining-room, whose high arched windows opened toward the garden, and whose panelled walls and beautifully carved mantel made it one of the finest rooms in the house, Mrs. Armstrong rested her hand lightly on June's shoulder and said smilingly:

"Now, my dear, tell me all about what you were doing this afternoon, when you were in such a hurry that you failed to be polite to your grandmother's guest."

"I don't like Major Fraser," said June, her face flushing uncomfortably, and her fingers still clutching the crumpled paper.

"That has nothing to do with your good manners, June. You may like or dislike a person, but in either case you are bound to be polite to a guest. Why, even savages treat an enemy with kindness if he comes to their camp. I am sure you did not mean to be impolite," concluded Mrs. Armstrong.

"I was in a hurry, Grandma. And truly, I forgot all about manners," June declared earnestly.

Mrs. Armstrong nodded approvingly. "Well, dear, there is never such need of haste that a lady forgets her good manners. What did you do with your basket of roses?"

Glenn, the negro servant, was helping June to the fluffy, golden omelet, and there was a little pause before June replied. Then, with a quick glance at Millicent, she said:

"I carried the basket to the Provost, Grandma. And the guard let me give it to the prisoners."

"To the Provost! Through the streets all by yourself! Bare-headed! Without permission!" exclaimed her grandmother, leaning back in her

chair as if too shocked to believe it possible that a little maid of South Carolina could have done such a thing.

A little whimper from Millicent, however, attracted her attention.

"What is the matter, Millicent?" she asked.

"June's told! And she made me promise not to. I'll have to give back her locket now," cried Millicent.

Mrs. Armstrong looked from one to the other of her little granddaughters.

"Finish your supper. I must think about this," she said quietly, and directly after supper she bade June go to her mother's room. "Roselinda will attend to your wants as usual, and Cindy can look after Millicent. You are both to go straight to bed. Your mother, June, will know what to say to you when she returns tomorrow, and until that time you can stay in your room."

June followed her cousin slowly through the long hall and up the stairs. Millie now and then glanced back at her as if June had in some way injured her, and slid into her room without a word of good-night.

But June did not notice it. Her thoughts were occupied by her grandmother's command

that she was to remain in her mother's chamber until Mrs. Lambert's return; and, with that folded paper entrusted to her by the unfortunate prisoner not delivered, the little girl felt this was indeed hard to bear.

Roselinda watched her young mistress with anxious eyes.

"W'oteber yo' been doin', Missie?" she asked, as she helped June prepare for bed.

"How do you get to Haddrell's Point, Roselinda?" June asked, disregarding the girl's question.

"W'y, Missie, I reckon yo' goes ter Wragg's Ferry an' sails 'cross. Dat's whar all de rebel off'cers be. I hears dat major tell yo' grandma dis afternoon dat termorrer, dah's some ob dose off'cers a-comin' to Charleston. He say General Balfour send fer 'em," replied Roselinda, as she shook up the pillow and made the bed ready for her young mistress.

"Oh, Roselinda! What time to-morrow?" June asked eagerly.

"He didn't say no time. He jes' say dey was a-comin'. Yo' gran'ma tell me I be to sit quiet in dis room 'til yo' go sleep, Missie June," said the girl.

"But I can't go to sleep, Roselinda. Why, it won't be dark for hours," complained June, resting her head against the cool pillow and her gaze turning toward the open window.

Mocking-birds were singing from the honeysuckle hedge toward the far end of the garden. The purple and violet blossoms of the wisteria nodded at the side of the window. The evening air was fragrant with the mingled scent of roses and garden blooms. From the distance came the faint note of a bugle call, and the chuckling laughter of negroes from their near-by quarters could be heard. But June was hardly conscious of any of these things.

If American officers were to arrive in Charleston to-morrow from Haddrell's Point, it might be that General Moultrie would be one of them, she thought. She knew that he had been summoned more than once by General Balfour.

"I can't stay shut up in this room to-morrow. I can't," she thought unhappily, remembering that it was not probable that her mother would reach home before late in the afternoon, and that, even if she could make up her mind to deliberately disobey her grandmother by leaving the room, it would be nearly impossible for her to escape from the house without being discovered.

Suddenly June sat up in bed. "Roselinda, bring me Mother's writing portfolio from her desk, and a pencil. And bring me a piece of brown paper that is in the pocket of my pink dress," she demanded, smiling with satisfaction at the thought that she had discovered a way to deliver the prisoner's message to General Moultrie.

The surprised Roselinda promptly obeyed, and in a moment June was carefully writing a letter to General Moultrie. She told him of her visit to the Provost, and described the man who had given her the message. Then she enclosed the message, sealed the envelope and tucked it under her pillow.

"Now, Roselinda, take this portfolio. And I reckon I can go to sleep even if it isn't dark," she said, for the excitement and adventure of the afternoon had tired her; and now that she saw a possible way of delivering the mysterious message she was ready to rest.

June drifted into slumber but it was fortunate that she could not imagine the difficulties in which the sealed letter under her pillow was so soon to involve her, for June had failed to write General Moultrie's name on the envelope, and it was fated to fall into other hands.

CHAPTER III

THE VOW

MILLICENT was awake at an early hour the next morning. There was a cool little breeze fluttering the window curtains, and a chorus of bird songs from the garden.

"I don't have to stay in my room," she thought. "I wonder if Junie's awake," and at the thought she was instantly out of bed and running across the hallway to Mrs. Lambert's room.

Cautiously opening the door Millie entered, her glance turning toward the big four-posted bed beyond the shaded windows.

"Oh, June! I wanted to surprise you," she exclaimed, disappointed to find her cousin sitting up against the big pillows.

"Did you bring my locket?" asked June; and, before Millie could respond, she quickly added: "Because you needn't give it back yet. You can keep it until I ask for it."

Millie was now established on the foot of the bed, and the two cousins smiled at each other,

thinking it a great adventure to be in Mrs. Lambert's room.

"You'll have to play dolls all day, Junie. I'll bring 'Arabella Caroline,' and we'll have a party, and Roselinda can bring us some cakes," suggested Millie, well pleased at June's willingness that she should keep the locket, but surprised to see June's face grow sober, and to see her shake her head at the mention of a doll's party.

"Millicent," said June, leaning forward and speaking in so serious a tone that Millie's smile vanished: she began to fear that her cousin meant to reclaim the pearl locket. "I want you to do something for me—something important, and something no one else must ever know."

Millicent's dark eyes widened. June was always thinking up delightful games; perhaps this was a new one, she thought hopefully, and instantly nodded her agreement.

"Oh, Junie, what is it?" she asked.

"A nod isn't a promise! You must make The Vow!" June solemnly replied.

The Vow was the most serious of the agreements made between the two cousins. They had agreed upon it during June's first week in her grandmother's house, and it was of so serious a

character that it impressed even Millicent. If June insisted on her taking The Vow she realized that some important service was to be required of her.

"June! I won't promise if you want me to do something I don't want to," she declared, swinging her feet from the bed, ready to run back to her own room if June meant to be disagreeable.

"Probably you'd like to do it. I reckon you would, Millicent. It's something I planned to do myself, only Grandma said I wasn't to leave this room until my mother comes home," said June, and Millicent's interest instantly revived.

"Well, tell me what it is," she responded.

June shook her head.

"Not until you take The Vow. Of course you needn't if you don't want to. And I reckon you would better give me back my locket right now," she said, and Millicent began to feel sure that whatever this mysterious service might be she must undertake it. Sliding quickly to the floor she faced her cousin, and holding up both hands, declared herself ready for the ceremony of The Vow.

In a low voice Millicent began: "I, Millicent Pinckney Armstrong, in the presence of my

cousin, June Valentine Lambert, do vow and promise to keep forever secret this deed and act. If I break this vow may it rain for forty days and forty nights, and blackness be upon the face of the earth. If I break this vow may Charleston sink in the sea. I hereby touch my heart and cross my throat to keep this vow," and Millicent, bowing low three times, finished her declamation, and swiftly drew herself up on the bed facing June.

"There! I reckon you can tell me now," she said, "and you would best hurry for 'tis time Roselinda brought us hot water."

June reached under her pillow and drew out the letter.

"Millie, some time to-day General Moultrie is coming to see General Balfour, and you must find out when he comes and give him this letter. You must," concluded June.

Millicent again slid to the floor. There were steps in the hall, and Millicent well knew that her grandmother would not approve of this early morning visit to her cousin's room. With a quick reproachful glance toward June she seized the letter that June held toward her, and ran swiftly from the room.

With a little sigh of satisfaction June leaned

back against the pillows. She now began to wonder what the message on the folded paper might be. She had often heard her mother speak of General Moultrie's efforts to help the American prisoners of war, and readily guessed that the man in the Provost had made an appeal to the American general for assistance. As General Moultrie was on parole he had certain privileges, and was frequently consulted by General Balfour regarding the exchange of prisoners.

The thought that her visit to the Provost might prove the means of liberating one of those unhappy men gave the little girl a sense of being of real service. "But I wish I might have given General Moultrie the letter myself," she thought, as she imagined the friendly approval with which the brave officer would greet Millicent.

"Millie can find out things easier than I could. She could even ask Major Fraser himself just when General Moultrie will arrive. And Grandma is sure to let Millie go for a walk with Roselinda. I reckon this way is the best, even if I have to stay up here all day," thought June, as Roselinda appeared in the doorway with a big grey pitcher filled with steaming water.

By the time June was dressed, her dark curls tied back with a crimson ribbon, and a sash of

the same color about her waist, Cindy had brought in a silver tray that held a glass dish filled with strawberries, a plate of delicately browned popovers, and a lustre pitcher filled with creamy milk.

When June had finished her breakfast, Mrs. Armstrong, carrying a number of books, entered the room.

"Good-morning, dear," she said in her usual pleasant tones; and June, who had firmly resolved that henceforth she would be beyond reproach as to good manners, was instantly on her feet making the graceful curtsey her grandmother had taught her.

Mrs. Armstrong smiled approvingly as she seated herself on the wide cushioned window-seat, near the table that held June's breakfast-tray.

"This will be a good time for you to make up lost time in your studies, June. There have been so many interruptions that I fear you and Millicent will forget all you learned at Miss Frame's excellent school. I have brought up Milton's poems, and I shall be well pleased if you learn this poem 'May Morning,' and repeat it to me this evening," said Mrs. Armstrong.

"Yes, Grandma," responded June. "Is Millicent going to walk?" she added quickly.

"I believe Roselinda will take her for a stroll later on if the sun be not too hot," said Mrs. Armstrong, her glance resting for a moment on the door of a shallow cupboard beside the fireplace. "Has your mother ever told you about that cupboard, June?" she asked.

June looked at her in surprise as she responded: "No, Grandma! Whatever is there to tell? It's just a narrow closet."

"Come and see," said Mrs. Armstrong, and June followed her grandmother across the room, wondering if the closet contained some valuable possession of which she had never before heard.

The door opened easily and June, peering into the narrow empty cupboard, gave a little cry of disappointment.

"It's empty!" she exclaimed, looking carefully about the smooth panelled walls.

"Yes. It is empty just now," said Mrs. Armstrong, stepping into the closet, and running her hand along the center panel, which moved slowly backward and disclosed a narrow, ladder-like stair. "This leads to the upper floor, and through another closet to the roof of the house," continued Mrs. Armstrong, smiling at June's expression of amazement.

"What is it for?" asked June.

"Why, it was doubtless built as a way of possible escape if the house was attacked by enemies," said Mrs. Armstrong, drawing the panel into place, and closing the closet door. "You know this house was built many years ago; and at that time the people often had to protect themselves against attacks from the Spanish, and against warlike Indians," she continued, as she and June returned to the window-seat.

"Just as they tried to against Sir Henry Clinton's soldiers," said June thoughtfully.

There was a little silence before Mrs. Armstrong responded: then, in a quiet tone, she said:

"Little maids like you, June, cannot judge of such great questions. Nor is it becoming that a girl so fortunate as to live under the protection of the loyal officers of King George the Third should show so rebellious a spirit. Why, even to-day General Balfour is to tell General William Moultrie of the generosity of General Earl Cornwallis, commander-in-chief of the British forces in America, who has agreed to the exchange and relief of American prisoners of war. Major Fraser gave me the news yesterday. Moultrie is to call upon General Balfour at eleven o'clock to-day."

"Oh, Grandma! Does Millicent know about

it?" asked June, with so much eagerness that Mrs. Armstrong smiled, thinking that after all perhaps June was less of a rebel against the king than she had imagined.

"Why, yes, my dear. And Roselinda is taking your cousin for a walk in that direction that she may hear the King's Band," she replied. And again bidding June to learn the poem she had suggested, Mrs. Armstrong left the little girl. She was well pleased by the result of her morning visit.

"June will be sure to think the hidden stairway is a marvelous secret; and the child seemed glad that her cousin should have the pleasure of hearing the band," and, almost tempted to release June from the punishment of staying in her mother's room until Mrs. Lambert's return, Mrs. Armstrong went toward the shaded balcony at the side of the house.

If she had happened to look back she would have been amazed to see her little granddaughter dancing about the room, her dark curls bobbing about her face and her crimson sash flying out like a banner, as she whispered: "Eleven o'clock! And Millicent right there so she will surely see General Moultrie." Then, hearing Cindy's familiar step, she ran back to the window-seat,

picked up the book of poems her grandmother had left there, and opened it where Mrs. Armstrong had placed a ribbon marker.

Cindy nodded and smiled as she tiptoed across the room toward her young mistress, and, without a word, picked up the tray and made her way quietly out of the room.

The moment she was gone June jumped up and ran to the door.

"Oh! I do wish I could have carried the message myself," she thought, as she heard the bell-like notes of the big clock, that stood on the lower floor, strike eleven, and remembered that this was the hour when the English and American generals were to meet.

As she stood there June could hear the servants moving about the house, and suddenly the clang of the big brass knocker at the front entrance.

"Whoever can that be?" she wondered, and listened for Glenn's familiar voice to welcome the visitor.

"Yas, sah, I'll call Mistress Armstrong, sah!" she heard him say; and the clink of spurs told her that the visitor must be a soldier who had come on horseback. Then followed the sound of several voices, all apparently talking at the same time. She recognized Roselinda's excited tones,

heard Glenn's exclamation of surprise, and then her grandmother's voice, speaking as if she were too amazed to understand what this unexpected visitor was evidently endeavoring to explain.

June ran swiftly toward the stairway and leaning over listened intently. She could just catch a glimpse of a scarlet-coated figure, and of her grandmother's ruffled skirt of sprigged white muslin.

" The little girl has evidently been a visitor at the Provost," she heard a strange voice declare. " General Balfour wishes to question her ——"

June waited to hear no more.

" They have found out about me! Oh! Perhaps they'll make me a prisoner," she thought fearfully, and ran back to her mother's chamber half expecting to hear footsteps close behind her, and the soldier's voice demanding that she should at once accompany him to the headquarters of the British general.

As she glanced about the room the remembrance of the hidden stairway flashed through her mind, and, without a thought of what might befall her in climbing up a dark and unknown passageway, she darted toward the closet door and pulled it open. Her hands ran along the smooth central panel, seeking the secret spring,

and, quite by chance, discovering it, the door moved back, and in a moment June's feet were on the ladder-like stairs, and she began to make her way slowly up through the dark passage.

She heard the door swing to behind her, and realized that she was now as securely shut away from the familiar rooms as if she were in another house.

June had often heard her mother and her friends speak of what loyal Americans were suffering under British rule in Charleston. She remembered that two ladies had been sent to the Provost because they had helped an American prisoner to escape. She knew that her mother's friend, Mrs. Pinckney, and her children had been turned out of her own house that Colonel Balfour himself might occupy it; so it is no wonder that June feared what might befall not only herself but her mother, if Colonel Balfour had discovered that she was the bearer of a secret message from an American prisoner of war.

"Millicent must have told. Oh! However did she dare break The Vow," thought June, as she discovered a ray of light through a crack in the panelling above her, and realized she had reached the upper floor.

Pushing against the panel, which was not

securely closed and opened easily, June stepped into a closet much larger than that of the one below.

For a moment the little girl stood quite still. She was a little breathless from her climb, and the closet was airless, and filled with dresses that brushed against her as she moved toward the door that opened into an upper chamber. There were two windows in this room, their blinds carefully closed although the windows were open. June looked about the room wonderingly. It was one of the guest rooms, now seldom in use, and she had never before seen it. Its high curtained bed, comfortable chairs and shining mahogany bureau, were much like the furnishings of her mother's room. June knew that in the closet, behind those rustling dresses, there was concealed the opening to the staircase leading to the roof.

"I'd better not wait; they may search the house for me," she thought, and was quickly back in the closet drawing the dresses away from the wall as she tried to discover the door to the secret staircase.

CHAPTER IV

THE SECRET STAIRCASE

It proved an easy matter for Millicent to carry out June's plan for a morning walk. At the breakfast table Mrs. Armstrong spoke of the cool air from the sea, and asked Millie if she would not like to go with Roselinda to hear the regimental band, that would play that morning near the British headquarters.

"You must wear the wide-brimmed leghorn hat, Millicent, and carry your pink parasol," she added, smiling at Millicent's evident pleasure in her suggestion.

"The concert will be over before eleven, as that is the time that Colonel Balfour is to receive Moultrie," she continued; and, shortly after her grandmother had gone up to June's room, Millicent and Roselinda were on their way down the pleasant street where wide-branched magnolia and mulberry trees cast a deep shade, and high walls of brick, covered with climbing rose-vines and fragrant jasmine, shut off the gardens of old houses from the gaze of the passer-by.

Millicent walked as slowly as possible. This morning she had but little interest in hearing the band.

"If I can only meet General Moultrie on his way to Colonel Balfour's 'twill be easy to hand him June's letter," she thought, and drew the envelope from her pocket and looked at it wonderingly.

"Whatever can June be writing about to the rebel general? June's a rebel herself," she thought, as Roselinda's voice made her start suddenly.

"Wha' for yo' sa'nter long dis way, Missie?" Roselinda asked. "Yo' acts like yo' don' wanter hear no music. I hears de ban' now."

"Grandma told me to walk slowly. You heard her, Roselinda," responded Millicent, coming to a full stop.

"Yas'm, Missie Millie. But yo' isn't walkin' at all. Yo' keeps a-stoppin' so I mighty near runs right over yo'," chuckled the good-natured girl, "an' dat music don' play much. Dey begins an' dey stops, and dat's 'bout all. It be movin' on ter 'leben o'clock."

"Oh! Hurry then, Roselinda!" exclaimed Millicent. "I want to see General Moultrie."

"My lan'! Yo' needn' run, Missie. Ain' yo'

grandma allers tellin' yo' dat ladies walk easy?" gasped Roselinda, as she hurried after the little girl, who was now running along the brick sidewalk as if she had no time to lose. Her pink sash fluttered behind her, and she was holding her pink parasol so far away from her head that any passer-by would surely have run against it.

General Moultrie was a little early for his appointment with the British officer, and as Millicent came in sight of Mrs. Pinckney's house she had a glimpse of a stalwart man, accompanied by a tall negro, just entering the gate.

"Dar goes Fortune an' his Gen'ral," declared Roselinda, recognizing the colored servant of General Moultrie who had been permitted to accompany his master to Haddrell's Point when the English had taken possession of Charleston.

At this announcement Millie ran even faster than before, so that just as General Moultrie reached the steps of the house she was close behind him, the letter clutched tightly in her hand, and confident that her promise to June was to be easily fulfilled.

In another moment she would have overtaken General Moultrie, but suddenly she found herself facing a red-coated officer, whose extended arm brought her to a standstill.

"Halt!" he sharply commanded, and Millie stared up at the tall soldier almost too surprised to realize what had happened. "Visitors are not received at this hour," he said.

"I'm not a visitor. I'm a messenger," Millicent managed to say.

"What? Are Marion's men about to attack the city with one gun and a crowbar?" laughed the officer, for the British did not yet realize the importance of the little group of loyal Americans under the fearless Marion. These men were planters, farmers, and hunters who knew every path and road of the countryside, and who were ready to live sparely and sacrifice everything to rescue America from British rule. "What's your message?" continued the smiling officer.

"I can't give it to you. It's for——" Millicent stopped quickly. June had said "no one must know."

"Well, if it's for the general I'll give it to him. But step out of the path, little maid," and he drew Millicent swiftly to one side as a group of red-coated men came up the walk, while the puzzled and alarmed Roselinda hovered about, thinking that her young mistress must be in danger.

"A letter, eh?" and, before Millicent could resist, the soldier had grasped the white missive. Turning it over he looked sharply at Millicent. "Who gave you this?" he questioned.

"I can't tell," whispered Millicent, turning to Roselinda as if for protection.

"We bes' be a-goin' home, Missie. Yo' grandma didn' say nuthin' 'bout yo' comin' to dis place," and, clasping Millicent's hand, Roselinda would have drawn the little girl away from what she believed to be a possible danger to the safety of her young mistress.

But a sharp command from the soldier prevented.

"You will wait until I know who this letter is for, and who sent it," he declared.

"My gracious sakes! I reckon ole Miss send it. She be a friend ob Colonel Balfour. Don' he come an' visit wid us? And can't she be sendin' ——" and Roselinda stopped to draw a long breath, determined to let this soldier realize that he was interfering "wid quality fo'k."

The soldier's frown deepened.

"Then it's all right. I'll deliver this," he said, and would have turned away with June's unaddressed letter had not Millicent seized it from his hand and, dropping her pink parasol, run swiftly

down the path. For, however timid she might seem toward this red-coated guard, she was far more fearful of breaking The Vow. The very thought of facing June with the confession of failure frightened Millie more than any other possibility.

Roselinda ran after her, and behind them ran the soldier, who overtook them before they reached the street, and, notwithstanding Roselinda's outcries, he had seized Millicent by the shoulder and marched her back up the path toward the house, with the negro girl close behind them.

As they reached the doorway, where two stalwart guards smiled with amusement at the evident vexation of the young officer, he turned quickly toward Roselinda and said:

"Be off with you, and bring someone responsible for this girl."

Roselinda, now thoroughly alarmed, darted off at her best speed. She had just reached the gates of the Armstrong house when she was overtaken by the young officer, mounted on a fine grey horse, with Millicent perched on the saddle in front of him.

June, as she peered down into the lower hall, had not seen her cousin, nor had she heard much

of the young officer's conversation. If she had known of the trouble in which she had involved Millicent she would not have fled to the secret staircase. She had heard just enough to believe that the red-coated soldier had come in search of the girl who had visited the Provost, and her only thought had been to escape.

As she pushed aside the garments, searching for the opening to the stairway leading to the roof, June suddenly thought of a new possibility.

"I can dress up so nobody would ever think I was a little girl," she whispered, for a moment forgetting her fears in the thought of pretending to be a visitor, and walking out of her grandmother's house unsuspected.

"This black dress isn't as long as the others," she decided, as she looked at the different dresses, and selected a full-skirted gown of black muslin. A lace bonnet with a long veil hung from a nearby peg, and June almost cried out her delight in its discovery.

It took but a few moments for her to slip the dress over her head. It billowed about her feet in soft folds, and she gazed at her reflection in the long mirror as she endeavored to draw her curls out of sight under the bonnet.

"It's splendid!" she declared aloud, letting

the veil fall over her face. "All I need do is to be careful to hold the skirt up so I can walk. I know just how ladies do it," and lifting the muslin skirt in one hand June took a few careful steps back and forth before the mirror.

"I ought to have a parasol," she thought, but a careful search of the closet failed to provide one, and June realized that she must now quickly decide on the safest way to escape from the house. "They may be searching for me this minute," she thought, opening the chamber door and stepping into the upper hallway.

Here she stopped for a moment listening intently. But the house seemed unusually quiet. There was no murmur of voices from the lower floors, no sound of hurrying steps; and, holding the muslin skirt up so that she could walk easily, June ventured toward the head of the stairway. Here she again paused to look down and to listen; and, reassured by the stillness, she went carefully down the stairs.

The door into her mother's room stood open, but no one was there. June's glance happened to rest on the book she had left on the window-seat, and in an instant she was in the room and had grasped the book.

Holding it in one hand, and clutching the bil-

lowing muslin skirt in the other, she now turned toward the wide stairs leading to the lower hall, and knew this would prove the most dangerous part of her adventure.

If Cindy or Roselinda or Glenn were in the lower hall, or, an even more to be feared possibility, if Millicent or her grandmother should suddenly appear, their sharp eyes might instantly discover that the queer figure in the ill-fitting gown was no unexpected visitor but June herself.

Stepping as softly as possible June made her way down the stairs. The big door was open, and the deep porch vacant. June fairly held her breath as she walked across the porch and down the steps. Her impulse was to run, but she knew that the uncomfortable skirt made this impossible. Glancing back toward the house she caught a glimpse of Glenn's white-coated figure near the door.

"He is looking after me. I'll walk more slowly," thought June, mincing along as she had noticed some of her mother's visitors do, and at last she passed through the gateway and began to breathe more easily.

A country wagon, driven by a negro, came clattering up the street. As it turned into the

driveway to the Armstrong house June had a glimpse of its passenger.

"Oh! It's Mother!" she whispered, half tempted to run after the wagon, call her mother's name, and tell her the story of her visit to the Provost, the prisoner's message, and, what June believed to be a fact, that the British officer meant to make her a prisoner.

"I mustn't! They might take her, too," she resolved, and she decided at that moment that, whatever happened, her mother must not know that she had interfered with the rules of the British Commandant of Charleston.

June now turned into Orange Street, a narrow roadway whose walls were overhung with flowering vines and trees. These walls were not as high as those on Church and Broad streets, and June had glimpses of the wide gardens beyond them.

As she neared a quaint little arched gateway in the wall June stopped suddenly, and for a moment knew not what to do; for coming through the gate was a lady whom she had often seen. "'Tis Mrs. Foster," she whispered. "What will I do if she looks at me?"

And Mrs. Foster certainly did look sharply

toward the queer little veiled figure in the trailing muslin dress.

"It must be some poor old woman who has to wear someone's cast-off garments," she decided, giving June a friendly nod as she passed her, tempted to stop and ask if she could help her in any way.

Before leaving this quiet street June began to wonder what she should do and where she should go.

"If I could only find General Moultrie he would surely help me," she thought. The sound of gay laughter and quick steps, and then the sight of two little girls in white dresses and carrying white parasols, with a smiling black "mammy" trotting behind them, made her shrink back against the wall, hoping they would pass without taking any notice of her.

But one of the girls instantly exclaimed: "Let's ask this old lady. I'm sure Mammy has taken the wrong way," and, with a little curtsey to the veiled figure, she said: "Will you be so kind, madam, as to tell us if this is the nearest way to Mrs. Armstrong's house?"

June nearly gasped in amazement as she recognized Betty and Leila Wragg, little girls of her own age, who had often come to visit Milli-

cent and June. Their father was a stout upholder of British rule, and more than once Betty had accused June of being a "rebel" against King George the Third.

For a moment June was sure they had seen through the veil and recognized her. Then she realized that not only Betty and Leila, but the old mammy as well really believed her to be an old woman.

It was now difficult for June not to laugh, and to control her voice and answer Betty's question. Drawing her veil more closely over her face, and speaking in a squeaky tone, she said, with a shake of the head:

"I am a stranger here, young miss. I am sorry that I cannot tell you," and nearly laughed aloud as she noticed Leila clasp her mammy's hand as if half afraid of this peculiar looking person.

"I tells yo' dis am de way," she heard the black mammy announce, as she hurried her young charges along the narrow street.

Keeping to the narrow passageways, and with no definite place in view, June was soon beyond the familiar streets and on the outskirts of the city. She began to feel very tired and thirsty, and the shade of a roadside tree tempted her to

rest. Walking to the side away from the road she sank down on the warm grass, pulled off the uncomfortable bonnet and veil, rested her head against the tree and, with a tired little sigh, looked off across the meadow that stretched toward the shore.

It was very pleasant and quiet in this shady place; and June, warm and tired from the heat of the day, the excitement of the morning, and her long walk, began to nod sleepily. The wide trunk of the tree and a little growth of underbrush shut her completely out of sight from the road, so that two men who came slouching along failed to see her.

"We'd best cross the meadow here. 'Tis none too safe along this road with British soldiers riding about," said one of the men, as they left the highway and threw themselves on the grass only a few feet away from where June rested.

At the sound of their voices the little girl was instantly wide awake. By turning her head she could see them plainly. The elder of the two was tall and thin, with a brown beard. He wore a shirt of faded blue cotton, and dark trousers, and a wide-rimmed straw hat. His companion was a much shorter man with a thin face that looked so worn and tired that June felt sure he

had journeyed a long distance, and his first words proved this.

"I'm too tired to move, Kirke. If I get to the shore I'll do well. If there isn't a boat there I'll have to give up," he said.

"We'll find a boat, and food, too. Never fear," his companion assured him.

"But I wish we knew better what was going on in Charleston these days," he added.

"If Cornwallis is willing to an exchange of soldiers it may be he's not too sure of holding South Carolina," said the other. "Marion knows most things. Some man or boy, and more than one woman, has managed to let him hear when Tarleton's soldiers were after him. There's not a plundering party leaves Charleston these days but someone slips through the lines, or paddles a canoe up the river, to give Marion notice."

"'Tis a dangerous undertaking for us this time," responded the older man in a discouraged voice. "I doubt if we can manage it. But we mustn't sit here!" and the two men stood up preparing to cross the meadow.

The elder man glanced quickly about and gave a startled exclamation.

He had discovered June. For an instant he

stood gazing down at her as if he could hardly believe his own eyes. Then his glance searched the roadway. With a quick step he was close beside the queer little figure that wore the dress of an elderly woman, but whose dark curls, tied back with a scarlet ribbon, were the curls of a little girl.

"What are you doing here?" he asked sternly.

"I am running away from Charleston, if you please," responded June.

"What for?" came the next question.

"Because if Colonel Balfour finds out what I've done he might put Mother and me in the Provost," June managed to say, as she started to her feet, and forgetting the long skirt, stumbled and fell in the long grass.

"Did you ever see the like of this?" declared Kirke, as he lifted her to her feet, and added quickly, "You'd best come along with us. Get rid of that long skirt. You can never walk in it."

Without a word June slipped off the black dress. Picking up the bonnet and veil and the book, she rolled the muslin dress about them into a clumsy bundle.

"I'm all ready," she said.

CHAPTER V

ASHLEY RIVER

THE sandy soil of the meadow made difficult walking for June, and she could not easily keep pace with the two men who, with occasional backward glances as if fearful of pursuit, hurried her toward the shore.

Beside the groups of wide-spreading live oaks there were occasional cedar and small pine trees. Tired and troubled as she was June did not fail to notice the bunches of Indian pinks now in full bloom, and the white and red flowered mullein, that was just spreading its delicate blossoms along the sandy field.

But she had little time to enjoy the fragrance and beauty of the scene. Now and then Kirke would ask her a quick question regarding the British officers in Charleston, or if the loyal Americans living there were decently treated; and at June's description of the men confined in the Provost, both Kirke and Mundy, as he called the smaller man, exclaimed that within a few months Marion and Sumter would drive the

British from Charleston and set all American prisoners free.

They spoke of the advance of General Greene, and to this June listened eagerly. "My father is one of General Greene's soldiers," she said, and Kirke promptly declared there was no braver officer in the American Army than General Greene.

"He and his men have already driven Lord Rawdon from most of his posts and baffled his fine schemes," he added, as they reached the sloping bank above the Ashley River, and June, too tired to go a step further, sank down on the grass.

"I'm dreadful thirsty," she declared, and Kirke nodded.

"There's a good spring within ten feet of you, little maid, and there should be something for us to eat," and, followed by Mundy, he disappeared behind a thick growth of dogwood bushes.

June brushed back the hair from her warm face, shook the sand out of her slippers, and made herself as comfortable as possible. She wondered what her mother might be thinking of her strange disappearance, and if Colonel Balfour would ever discover which one of the Provost prisoners had given her the note.

June heard the murmur of her companions' voices, and Kirke called to her:

"Come this way, beyond the dogwoods," and, leaving the bundled up book, dress and bonnet behind her, June quickly obeyed and in a moment more was kneeling near a clear spring of water that bubbled up through the sand.

She drank thirstily, and bathed her hands and face, and then turned to where the two men were sitting.

"'Tis like an arbor!" she declared, looking up at the interlaced branches and thick leaves of the hickory trees.

"Food!" said Mundy, smiling at the little girl, and holding out a piece of corn bread toward her.

June ate it with good appetite, and found a slice of cold bacon tasted much better than it looked. The men ate hungrily, and they all made another visit to the spring.

The sun was now low in the western sky, and there was a welcome coolness in the air. As June sat there with her new friends and noticed their worn and ragged garments, their boots that hardly held together, and remembered that most of the American Army that were struggling to establish an independent government for Amer-

ica were suffering equal privations with these men, the little girl wondered how Grandmother Armstrong could call them "rebels," and not want to help them in their great undertaking; and, quite forgetting that she was speaking aloud, she announced:

"I'm going to help, anyway."

If the men heard her they made no response. They were resting close to the trunk of one of the big trees. Their eyes were closed, and June was sure they were asleep; and selecting a place where the ground seemed more smooth than near the trees, and where the river breeze made the air cool and pleasant, June rested her head on her clumsy bundle and was quickly asleep.

The soft shadows of the southern evening drifted over the broad river. Faint stars glimmered through the branches of the trees. Now and then the call of a bird sounded on the quiet air, and the soft lap of the water could be faintly heard along the banks of the river.

June slumbered on as peacefully as if in her own bed in the big chamber at Grandmother Armstrong's. But the sound of her companions' voices as they talked softly together gradually awakened her.

"There was naught else to do but take the

maid along. Balfour would manage to imprison her whole family if he took the notion," she heard Kirke say, and Mundy's quick response: "Surely a brave child. But she was a queer sight in the woman's dress," and the two men chuckled with amusement as they recalled their first sight of June.

"Her mother will be sadly troubled not knowing what has befallen the little maid," continued Mundy.

"'Twould be a worse trouble if they were both shut up in the Provost, as the girl seemed to fear. If she keeps away a bit Balfour will have more important things to trouble him than the doings of a little girl," said Kirke, and they laughed with satisfaction as they both remembered General Morgan's recent victory over the British troops commanded by Colonel Tarleton.

Both these men were confident that Marion and Sumter would continue to intercept British convoys of provisions, harass British outposts, and alarm their officers, until Cornwallis himself would realize that South Carolina was far from being a conquered state.

June was now wide awake. At Kirke's statement that in a little while it would be safe for her to return to her mother, she lost something

of the dread and unhappiness that had shadowed her thoughts. "Why, of course," she whispered happily to herself, "when they can't find me Colonel Balfour will forget about me. Maybe I can get back into Mother's room without anyone knowing it."

"We'd best take her with us and leave her at Tirrell's plantation. Mistress Tirrell will take care of her, and find some safe way to send her back to Charleston," said Kirke; and June heard the men moving about, and in a moment Mundy's shadowy figure was beside her.

"I'm awake," said June. "I heard what you said about taking me to Tirrell's, and I hope I am not a trouble to you."

It was too dark for June to see the man's face, but when she heard his kindly voice she felt sure that he was smiling.

"'Tis no trouble, little maid. We were just saying 'twas good luck that we met you, for you have given us news that Marion will be glad to hear," he responded, and June, with a little thrill of delight, realized that these new friends were "Marion's men."

June picked up her bundle and followed Mundy toward the shore, with Kirke's tall figure striding on ahead. Bidding her stand near an

old tree, covered with drooping moss, Mundy stepped ahead and June heard the noise of a boat sliding over the shore into the water, and a moment later Mundy was at her side, bidding her to step carefully. He lifted her into the flat-bottomed craft, placing her bundle as a prop for her shoulders against one end of the boat.

"Ready," he whispered, and picking up a stout pole helped Kirke push the punt clear of the shore into deeper water.

June peered through the darkness. It seemed much lighter now that they were away from the tree-lined shore. The broad river stretched about them like a dark mirror, reflecting the summer stars. Although the boat made but little noise she realized they were moving swiftly up-stream. The quiet of the night, the smooth movement over the silent river, gave her a new sense of safety and protection, and June rested her head against the bundle of the crumpled dress and bonnet and "Milton's Poems," and was soon fast asleep.

It was at this time, in May, 1781, that Lord Rawdon, who was in command of the British forces at Camden, South Carolina, was forced by General Greene to evacuate that town, after burning many private dwellings, mills, and a

great deal of his own baggage. He marched his entire army to the south of the Santee River; and, although Lord Rawdon saved his men, he had lost one of the important posts on which the British depended to control the state; and it was the beginning of a number of successes by American forces.

June awoke from her slumbers to hear Kirke recalling these triumphs. She heard him tell of the recent surrender to General Sumter of the British garrison at Orangeburgh. And, as he recalled Marion's advance against Fort Motte, the little girl leaned forward, listening eagerly.

"'Twas Mrs. Motte who was the bravest soldier of them all. Her house was the centre of the British fort. They had built their works about it, and she had moved to a near-by hut. Marion told her that the easiest way to conquer the garrison was to burn her home, and she gave him a quiver full of African arrows with which he could shoot fire into the house. It caught and burned, and the lady stood by without a word. A heroine we ought not to forget, Mundy," said Kirke.

"Did she stay on in the hut?" asked June anxiously.

"Still awake, little maid?" said Kirke. "I

believe she did. But she'll always be remembered as a good soldier. You may find yourself something of a heroine when you get back to Charleston," he added.

June smiled at this, wondering what Millicent would say to such a statement. Then, as the darkness deepened over the river, and the men became silent, she slept again; nor did she awake until long after the boat had left Ashley River, and was making its slow way up a narrow creek.

The morning air was fragrant with the odor of wild jasmine, and the banks of the creek thickly wooded with pine and cedar trees. The little girl looked anxiously about for some trace of a house, or cultivated fields that might tell of a plantation near at hand, but she could see only what seemed a wilderness.

Kirke and Mundy were on their feet, poling the clumsy boat carefully around the roots of submerged trees, and watchful that their craft did not ground on the occasional mud-banks. Noticing that June was awake Mundy gave her a smiling nod:

"We'll be at the Tirrells' in time for breakfast," he said, and as they carefully rounded a wooded point and came into a wider stretch of

THEY WERE LANDING AT THE TIRRELL PLANTATION

clear water June could see a smooth field and the chimney of a house.

As the boat reached a rough landing place June made a new discovery: it was that the craft was deeply loaded with a variety of queer looking kegs, and a number of long barreled rifles. Where these had been obtained June never discovered. But Marion's men were ever on the alert to secure supplies for the American forces. Men, like Mundy and Kirke, journeyed about the countryside disguised as farmers, or even as Tory soldiers, collecting whatever they could find that would be of use. Marion never demanded arms or provisions from the impoverished government. Patriotic women of South Carolina spun and wove, and made garments for his men. There were shotguns in every house that were gladly given to any American soldier, and they managed to secure food for themselves.

Women living alone with their children on deserted plantations managed to plant and harvest scanty crops; and to fill and hide bags for Marion's men to secure when opportunity offered.

When June tried to stand she found herself so stiff and clumsy from the long hours in the boat that she could hardly move, and was glad to have Kirke lift her in his arms and set her safely on

shore. "My bundle!" she exclaimed, for she was resolved to take the dress, bonnet and book safely back to Charleston, and Mundy brought along these valuable possessions, saying:

"I'll tote these up to the house, little maid," and leaving the boat as if confident of its security, the men now in evident good spirits, hurried June along the field in the direction of the house whose chimney rose above an orchard of straggling peach and plum trees.

When they had passed a thick growth of myrtle trees Kirke motioned to them to stop, and the mournful cry of a screech-owl, twice repeated, rang through the morning air.

In an instant came the answering call; and, smiling down at June's look of amazement, Kirke said:

"Better to be sure than sorry. That call tells Mistress Tirrell that friends are at hand, and her answer tells us that 'tis safe for us to advance."

For although the Tirrell plantation was on the shores of a lonely creek, many miles from any other habitation, the people of South Carolina, in 1781, knew they must protect the safety of their homes by every possible precaution; and this remote household had its signals, well known to trustworthy scouts.

"Look!" whispered June, as she saw a negro boy come running to meet them.

"Mistress say hurry 'long," he smilingly announced, and disappeared as suddenly as he had arrived.

June was sure that no one had ever been as tired and hungry as she was when they reached the wide open door of the long, unpainted house. Since her breakfast on the morning before she had eaten only the coarse corn bread and slice of cold bacon. She had walked several miles before meeting Kirke and Mundy, and the long journey in the uncomfortable boat had added to her fatigue.

As she saw a woman standing in the open doorway, a tall woman in a dress of faded brown cotton, who lifted both hands in amazement at the sight of a little girl in a bedraggled white dress with a stringy crimson sash trailing behind her, June realized that she was indeed far from home. She began to wish that Grandma Armstrong had never shown her the secret stairway. But at the first sound of Mrs. Tirrell's voice June knew she had found a friend.

"Why, my poor child! What ill-fortune has befallen you," exclaimed the woman, her friendly arm going about the little girl and drawing her

into a cool pleasant room. Beyond a brief word to Kirke and Mundy she gave them no attention whatever until she had seated June on a wide settee near the open window.

"Rest here a minute, dear child, 'til I fetch you some cool water," she said, and followed the men toward a room across the hall where Kirke quickly told her all he knew of June's history.

"I feared another family had been made homeless," June heard her say, and in a moment she was back with a mug of cool milk which June drank gratefully.

Not until June had eaten an excellent breakfast did Mrs. Tirrell suggest that there was plenty of warm water, and lead the little girl to a cool upper chamber, where a negro girl, wearing a single long straight garment made of coarse cotton, brought her hot water and a towel.

"What's your name?" asked June.

"Marty," answered the girl, and vanished as if afraid of other questions.

"This dress is awful," thought June, as she held up her bedraggled white dress, and remembered its dainty freshness when Roselinda had helped her put it on.

But there was no other dress to take its place, and June put it on. Her hair ribbon had dis-

appeared, and she resolved not to wear the red sash. She no longer felt lame and tired, but was eager to begin her acquaintance with Mrs. Tirrell, and to find out how soon this new friend thought it would be safe for her to return to Charleston.

She ran down the narrow twisted staircase, and hearing voices outside turned to the open door just in time to see Kirke and Mundy, mounted on fine horses, their rifles across their saddle-bows, ride off into the grove that surrounded the house. As they disappeared from sight they were singing, and the gay words of the old song drifted back:

"'Let us go to the woods,' says Richard to Robin.
'Let us go to the woods,' says Robin to Bobbin.
'Let us go to the woods,' says John all alone.
'Let us go to the woods,' says everyone."

"Oh, I didn't thank them for bringing me here," exclaimed the little girl, turning to Mrs. Tirrell who came out of the house at that moment, and put her arm about the little girl's shoulders, smiling down at June's eager face.

"I think I am the one to thank Kirke and Mundy for bringing you here. They have told me of finding you on the highway, and of your reason for running away. But 'tis a pity you

are so far from home and that there is no way of sending news of your safety to your family." As Mrs. Tirrell spoke she drew the little girl back into the house, and June discovered her book lying on the table. She wondered where the dress and bonnet were, but did not ask.

"I have been hiding those two horses in the swamp for days," continued Mrs. Tirrell, "and I am glad enough to see the last of them."

For, although the Tirrell plantation was away from the main traveled highways, and the house nearly hidden by sheltering woods, Mrs. Tirrell well knew that any day might bring a party of Tarleton's raiders who would carry off everything they could discover.

And it was not only the soldiers of the British that threatened the safety of American homes in South Carolina during the War of the Revolution. People who were not fighting on either side, many of them criminals hiding from justice, now emerged from their hiding places, and, declaring themselves "King's men," appropriated whatever they could find, and burned the houses of those who defied or opposed them. Mrs. Tirrell's husband and son were both with Marion's men, and she lived alone with only "Marty," the negro girl, and her brother Bob.

The place was a frequent meeting place for American soldiers in need of food, shelter or clothing; but Mrs. Tirrell took every possible precaution for safety.

As June followed her new friend about the place that morning she felt as if she had opened a door into a new world. Mrs. Tirrell had provided her with one of her own sunbonnets, and June peered out from this with many exclamations of wonder and surprise as Mrs. Tirrell showed her the hidden enclosure where four sheep and two young lambs were safely hidden.

"A sheep is the most valuable of all possessions just now, because its wool can be spun into yarn and woven into cloth for American soldiers," she explained.

There was a hidden pen for two young pigs, and a number of well-cultivated garden plots of vegetables. In one of these Bob was at work, and further on they found Marty busy with her hoe.

"I think you can help me with the chickens," said Mrs. Tirrell, as she led June toward a low shed nearly hidden by blossoming dogwood. Here a bustling, scolding hen ruffled her white feathers at them, as she called to a flock of downy chicks that ran about in wild excitement.

CHAPTER VI

TARLETON'S RAIDERS

If June had listened a moment longer that morning when she hung over the railing of the stairway in her Grandmother Armstrong's house, and glimpsed the red coat, and heard an unknown voice speak of a girl's visit to the Provost, she would not have fled to the secret staircase. For she would have discovered that it was Millicent whom Colonel Balfour meant to question, and would have realized that Millicent had not broken The Vow.

Mrs. Armstrong had listened in amazement to the young officer's story of Millicent's appearance at Colonel Balfour's house, carrying a note evidently intended for some American officer and written by a prisoner in the Provost.

"The fact that the message is not signed or addressed makes it the more dangerous. And the girl will not answer a single question," the officer told Mrs. Armstrong, frowning at the frightened Millicent.

Nor could her grandmother persuade her to tell who had given her the note or for whom it

was intended. It was in vain that Mrs. Armstrong told her that Colonel Balfour would think them all disloyal to King George the Third, and might find some way to punish the entire family. Millie remained silent, or began to sob so unhappily that her grandmother at last decided to say no more.

But Mrs. Armstrong lost no time in presenting herself at the British headquarters, where she was graciously received by Colonel Balfour.

"I fear 'tis some game my granddaughters are playing," she declared. "They hear so much of war, of scouts and people sending messages that I believe they imagined a mysterious note, supposed to be from a prisoner to an American officer, would be a great adventure."

"Where is your other granddaughter?" asked Balfour.

"Safely in her mother's chamber, where she is to stay as a punishment for running away yesterday," said Mrs. Armstrong, and added: "You see, Colonel, both of them are little girls, only eleven years old. And Millicent's father and mother are in England."

"Child's play, no doubt, madam," responded Colonel Balfour, "but 'tis fortunate for them that your loyalty to the King's government is

well known or we could not so easily let the matter end;" and, bidding Mrs. Armstrong think no more of the matter, he politely escorted her to the entrance.

The scrap of brown paper and June's letter lay on a side table in the room where Balfour had received General Moultrie. They seemed of so little significance to the English officer that, with a little laugh, he had handed them to his guest, bidding him read them.

"Do they carry any message to you, General Moultrie?" he questioned.

The American general's face was grave as he answered: "'Tis such a message as any unfortunate man shut up in such a place as the Provost might send. You should give those people better quarters, Colonel Balfour."

"We still hold Charleston," the English officer reminded him, and General Moultrie bowed.

But June, with Millicent's loyal aid, had delivered a message that was of more importance than the British officer imagined.

When General Moultrie left the British headquarters on that May day in 1781, he carried with him the cheering news that he was soon to be a free man.

Earl Cornwallis had agreed with the Ameri-

can Congress to an exchange of prisoners of equal rank, and General Moultrie was told that he would be furnished with a small brig to take himself and his family to Philadelphia and to be ready to sail some time in June.

But, notwithstanding this good news, General Moultrie's thoughts lingered on the mysterious letter. He resolved to do his best to help the prisoner who had appealed to him.

Millicent's first thought on reaching home had been to find June and accuse her of making all the trouble. But Roselinda forbade her entering Mrs. Lambert's room.

"No, Missie. Yo' gran'ma tell me pertic'lar dat yo' was to go straight to yo' own room an' stay dar 'til she comes home," and Millicent reluctantly obeyed. She brought Arabella Caroline to the wide window-seat, and found comfort in her society.

No one in the house knew of June's disappearance. On Mrs. Lambert's arrival Glenn had endeavored to explain that both June and Millicent were upstairs; but Mrs. Lambert supposed them to be together in their own room. And, believing that their grandmother had told them to stay there for some good reason, she did not go to their room.

The midday meal was served late, and not until Mrs. Armstrong, June's mother and Millicent had entered the dining-room was it discovered that June had not been with Millicent.

For a time neither her mother nor grandmother was troubled. One or the other of the girls was often late to the noonday meal; and Glenn was told to look through the garden for June, while Roselinda searched the house.

When she could not be found they were all alarmed, and Glenn suddenly remembered that he had seen a strange looking old woman going down through the garden that morning.

"But June was not with her?" asked Mrs. Lambert.

"No'm," Glenn agreed, "but dat woman was sort ob witch-woman; maybe she ——"

But Mrs. Armstrong's "Nonsense" made Glenn instantly silent.

Nevertheless, as the hours went by and search and inquiry up and down the street failed to discover any trace of June, both Mrs. Lambert and her mother began to wonder about the mysterious woman Glenn had seen.

"Do you suppose she persuaded June to go to the wharves with her, or has carried her off into the country?" suggested Mrs. Armstrong.

June's mother feared such a possibility, and when evening came they had carried their search to the homes of friends, along the wharves and through unfamiliar streets. But no one had seen any wandering little girl wearing a white dress and a crimson sash.

Several people had seen the woman wearing a long black veil, and carrying a book, but she had been always alone. And as the shadows of the evening crept over house and garden June's mother and grandmother were too worried to tell each other what they both feared: that, in some way, the veiled woman was responsible for June's disappearance.

Inquiries were sent in all directions, but no news came of the missing girl. Mrs. Lambert, as day after day passed, became convinced that the queer old woman in the black dress and long veil had lured June away.

They all thought of this mysterious stranger as old, for Glenn had described her as: "Mighty tottery on her feet, Mistress, and bowed over like she was feeble." He shook his head solemnly at any mention of the mysterious woman, and gradually people declared that June Lambert had been carried off by a queer old woman.

"June won't stay. She will come back," Mil-

licent would declare whenever her cousin's name was mentioned.

If they could have known how kind a friend June had found in Mrs. Tirrell her family would have felt comforted and secure of the little girl's safety. And if June could have sent them a message she would have been really happy on this lonely plantation.

She had quickly discovered that the chickens were being raised to furnish food for Marion's men, and that the pigs were meant for a similar fate, as well as the products of the vegetable garden.

"We must contrive you a dress, Junie," said Mrs. Tirrell, on the day following the little girl's arrival. "This white muslin must be washed and mended for you to wear when you return to Charleston." And from her own scant wardrobe the kindly woman selected a dress of faded green cotton, and made it over for her little visitor.

"'Tis just the color of beech leaves," declared June admiringly, as she put it on. "If I was in the woods no one could see me," and it was not long before she had reason to rejoice that this was so.

When her new dress was ready Mrs. Tirrell had another suggestion:

"We would best save your white stockings and your slippers, too, Junie, dear, so that when the time comes for your return home you will go back neatly dressed. What do you say to going without stockings, and wearing these little leather sandals?" and she showed June a clumsy slipper of leather that tied across her ankle with leather thongs.

"Oh! I like these. They are nice and cool," declared June, and, wearing the big sunbonnet of faded green cotton, the plain dress of the same material, and the clumsy, home-made sandals, June had little resemblance to the white clad little girl who had climbed the secret stairway in her grandmother's house.

She slept on a narrow bed in Mrs. Tirrell's room. More than once she was awakened suddenly by the call of the screech-owl sounding close at hand, and would hear the faithful Bob's unfailing response, and Marty hastening to call Mrs. Tirrell. There would be the noise of horses' hoofs, the murmur of voices, and a stir and bustle as of bags dragged over floors. And June, too excited to sleep, would sit up in her bed and listen intently, knowing that some scouting party of American soldiers had come to the

plantation to secure food, or to bring guns for other scouts who would come after them.

One night the little girl found it impossible to stay quietly in bed, and ran to the window. The trees growing so near the house cast a deep shadow, and the darkness of the summer night prevented her seeing clearly. But she could see a number of horses fastened near the house, and two men near them.

"General Greene's army should reach Ninety-Six to-night," she heard one of them say. "The place has a big British force with Lieutenant Colonel Cruger in command. 'Twill be no easy matter for our men to take that place."

Any mention of General Greene made June hopeful that her own father might not be far away, and that some good fortune might give them a chance to meet, and she now listened intently hoping to hear something of the movements of Greene's men. But the voices were sometimes indistinct; she heard one say that he feared Lord Rawdon would bring reënforcements to aid Colonel Cruger, and that the siege against Ninety-Six would be useless.

Then there was a quick command, and the men mounted their horses and were off, and June ran back to her bed.

It was on the following morning that June had her first adventure at the Tirrell plantation.

The enclosure where the sheep were concealed was some distance from the house. Every morning either Mrs. Tirrell or Marty, with June trotting beside them, visited the place to guide the sheep to the creek for water, to shepherd them in quiet fields where they could crop the young grass and feed in safety.

"We will have to take more precautions now," said Mrs. Tirrell as she and June turned the four sheep and the two lambs into a small field nearly enclosed by thick growths of dogwood, and where an occasional peach tree flourished.

"We have always left the sheep to feed by themselves for an hour or two," continued Mrs. Tirrell, looking anxiously about as if fearing some unseen enemy, "but the men who stopped here last night bade me not have a fire for several days lest the smoke be discovered by Tarleton's Rangers who are scouring the country near here. We'll have to do our cooking at night."

"I'll stay with the sheep," suggested June. "If I hear or see anyone I'm sure I can hide the sheep. The lambs know me now, and will follow me. See," and June moved quietly toward the lamb nearest her, rubbed its woolly head, talked

to it softly, and, with her hand resting gently on the little creature's neck, walked along the edge of the field with the lamb trotting contentedly beside her, and the other sheep following.

"Why, June! That is splendid!" declared Mrs. Tirrell. "There is so much for Bob and Marty to do that I cannot spare them. And I must keep close to the house to make sure that anyone arriving by way of the creek and giving the signal is answered. You will be really helping," and, telling June the direction in which it would be safest to turn the sheep in case of danger, Mrs. Tirrell hurried back to the house.

For a few moments June amused herself with making collars of dogwood leaves and slipping these around the lambs' necks. Then, as the morning sun grew warmer, she found a pleasant place well in the shade of a catalpa tree that towered above the underbrush.

Some distance across the little field there was an opening through which June could see. And as she sat there, with the lambs wandering about, near at hand, her glance turned toward the distant view.

There were birds calling and fluttering among the tree-tops, and as June's glance discovered a number of indistinct objects in the distance her

first thought was that it was a flock of birds. Then suddenly she knew they were mounted men riding across the fields.

June stood up and watched intently. Now and then the approaching horsemen were hidden from sight by intervening woods, then they would be plainly seen again, and at last June caught the color of scarlet and knew these men were soldiers of the King.

"They are coming straight toward this place. Oh! They mustn't find Mrs. Tirrell's house. They mustn't!" thought the little girl, remembering that Tarleton's soldiers had destroyed more than one plantation.

But June had promised Mrs. Tirrell to guard the sheep and save them from any possible danger. She must do this first of all; and, with another quick glance toward the group of horsemen, she persuaded the lambs and sheep to follow her, and led them carefully in the direction of their hidden enclosure.

"If they are frightened now they'll run toward the place they know," she thought hopefully; and leaving the sheep grazing peacefully near their familiar surroundings, June ran swiftly back to a place where she could watch the advance of the mounted men.

At first she failed to see them.

"They are not coming this way," she thought hopefully, half ashamed at her own readiness to be afraid of distant travelers. And then she shrank quickly back among the green leaves of the dogwoods; for, riding slowly in single file, four red-coated soldiers were coming straight through the opening into the field.

They circled round the enclosure as if expecting to discover some opening that would lead them to a house, for June heard one of them laugh and say:

"'Tis but another of your dreams, Mason. There's no house or sign of a habitation near here; nor any creek, either. We'd best go back the way we came, and that as fast as possible."

As the man spoke the others drew rein in the shade of the big catalpa tree, and one man swung himself from the saddle, saying:

"I'll scout about on foot a bit. There's some hidden place where the rebels find shelter, and get supplies, and I'll wager it's near here. Hobble those horses, and scatter about through these woods and see what you can find. Just give a call if you find a house or get in trouble!" and the speaker turned straight toward the place where June cowered among the bushes.

CHAPTER VII

THE SHRIEK-OWL

FORTUNATELY for June's safety she was well sheltered by the thickly growing leaves; and her faded green dress and sunbonnet blended with the underbrush so closely that there was no contrast of color to attract the eye.

As the man strode past her hiding-place, so near that June could feel the sway of the branches that he pushed aside, the little girl fairly held her breath in fear.

"If he should catch sight of me he would know there was a house near," she thought, and then realized there was not a moment to be lost if there was anything to be done to save Mrs. Tirrell's home, and to protect the provisions there stored for the American soldiers.

With four men wandering through the hills and woodland one of them might at any moment discover the hidden sheep, or find his way to the creek up which so often came the boats of some daring soldiers.

"The horses! If the horses start off the men

will run after them!" thought June, and was instantly free from the sheltering underbrush, running to where the four horses stood in the shade of a wide branched oak. Only one horse was hobbled; the other three had been left fastened only by their bridle-reins being thrown over a branch of the tree.

They hung their heads as if tired and glad of rest, and as June ran toward them did not seem to notice her. June was well used to horses. On her plantation home she had her own pony, and she had no fear of these horses. In a moment she loosened their bridle-reins, and stood close beside a small grey horse trying to decide what to do.

"'Tis no use just to turn them loose. They might only wander about this field. Or they might start and run straight toward the creek! Oh! Whatever can I do!" and June gave a quick glance about, knowing that at any moment one of the red-coated soldiers might appear, or a loud call might tell of their discovery of the house.

The little grey horse turned his head toward her and whinnied.

"I'll have to ride one and lead one. Perhaps the other will follow," decided June, and leading the grey to an old stump she managed to

climb into the saddle. Holding the bridle-rein of a brown horse she now urged the grey into a trot, and, as she had hoped, the third horse followed them.

"I'll go straight away from the creek, the way they came," decided June, clinging to the saddle and urging her mount to a faster pace until they had left the field. Then she began to shout at the top of her voice:

"Ho! Ho! Marion's men!"

The hobbled horse left alone in the field began to whinny, and both June's call and the noise made by the deserted horse reached the ears of one of the soldiers who came hurrying back to the enclosure just in time to catch a glimpse of the horses, one following the other, going off at a run in the direction from which they had come.

His loud calls instantly brought his companions; and the hobbled horse was quickly freed. One of the men mounted him to pursue the fleeing horses, and the others, angry and unused to running over rough fields, followed him on foot.

June could not possibly have thought of a better plan to save Mrs. Tirrell's home from being discovered by these raiders. They knew but little of this countryside, and if left without

horses they might wander about helplessly until captured by the men they called " rebels."

The redcoats realized this; and, little as they liked it, they knew there was nothing else to do but pursue the runaways and capture them.

June, leaning low in the saddle, kicking her heels against the horse, and calling: " Go! Go! Faster! Faster," spurred the little grey on. The following horses were larger than the grey, and neither the mounted soldier pursuing them, nor the angry men who ran behind him, discovered the little figure in the faded gown clinging to the leader's saddle.

June had a good start; she felt sure they could not quickly overtake her; and as she rode she resolved to put as good a distance between the plantation and these raiders as possible. She did not even think of her own danger. If these men had discovered that someone was mounted on the grey horse a quick shot would undoubtedly have sent her tumbling from the saddle. Beside this peril every stride was taking her farther and farther from the protection of friends.

When she knew the redcoats were really in pursuit June let go the bridle-rein of the horse she was leading. But his pace did not lessen. The third horse, however, began to go more

slowly. His master's call had reached him. He looked back over his shoulder; his gait changed to a trot, then to a walk, and at last he stopped, to be easily overtaken and secured by the rider behind him.

"I'll have to slide off this horse or they'll see me," thought June, as a backward glance showed her two mounted men coming along an open field, while behind them their two red-coated companions struggled valiantly along.

With a sharp pull on the bridle-rein June swung the grey horse behind a thick growth of young cedars, let herself carefully down from the saddle and ran into the underbrush.

The two horses, hot and tired, were glad enough to come to a standstill. They shook their heads, moved into such shade as they could find, and made no effort to go on.

It was fortunate that the little girl had stopped when she did, for the pursuers were so close behind her that as she crouched behind the cedars she heard the rattle of their bridle-chains, and the beat of the horses' hoofs.

With a shout of satisfaction the two raiders swung from their saddles, and turned to call words of encouragement to their companions.

They now fastened the horses securely; and

evidently still angry over what they believed a runaway caused by the appearance of an unknown enemy, they sank down on the warm earth, pulled off their caps, and began to talk.

"Marion's men are everywhere," grumbled one of them. "I doubt not they were on our track from the hour we started. Was it you who gave warning?"

"Not I," June heard his companion respond, "but 'tis good luck for us that we heard them in time. We'd best get back to camp as soon as the others overtake us. Here they come now."

June's courage returned as she listened to their talk and realized that these men had no suspicion of having been lured away from their search.

"They didn't find the sheep; they don't know how near they were to the house," she whispered, as she saw the newcomers also dismount, and heard them declare they must rest before riding on.

"We've been in the saddle since sunrise," said one of them, "and to run a couple of miles over this country is worse than to face a regiment of Yankees."

"'Tis better here than facing their guns at Ninety-Six. But Lord Rawdon is sure to be on

the march with reënforcements by this time, and he will soon conquer General Greene's army. 'Tis good luck the British reënforcements have reached Charleston," said another.

Hearing this June became more alert than ever. She had heard one of the American scouts tell Mrs. Tirrell that General Greene was besieging the British stronghold at Ninety-Six; and that if they conquered it they would be in control of South Carolina, and could soon drive the invading British from the state.

Now, hearing that Lord Rawdon was marching to the aid of Colonel Cruger, the little girl forgot the peril of her own position in her eagerness to hear distinctly, and pushed away a branch of a scrubby cedar that she might peer through.

"What's that?" exclaimed the soldier who was resting close beside the cedars. "Have we fallen into an ambush?" and he was instantly on his feet, listening intently.

Just then two mocking-birds darted up into the air from the underbrush, and with a little laugh the man sank back to his former position, declaring that every noise meant a warning. The others began to tell of Marion's exploits: of his stronghold in some distant swamp on the borders of the Santee River.

It was now noonday, and June, crouching behind the cedars, began to feel the heat of the burning sun. She dared not move for fear of discovery, and she was very thirsty.

The redcoats were taking packages of food from their saddle-bags; and, discovering a sluggish brook near their resting place, one of the men brought water for them to drink.

"They may stay here for hours," June told herself. And at this possibility a new idea entered her head. If these men could be captured it might be of the greatest help to the American cause.

"Marion's men need horses and guns. Four horses and four guns!" she whispered. "Oh! If only Kirke and Mundy would come. I must get back. Mrs. Tirrell may know a way."

Very carefully she began to crawl away from the little clearing where the redcoats were eating and drinking. Creeping on her hands and knees she made her noiseless way for some distance. Then, rising to her feet, she looked carefully in every direction.

She was about two miles from the Tirrell plantation. There was no time to lose if any effort could be made to capture these raiders; and she remembered that American scouts had

come to the plantation twice during the week she had been there.

"There may be a boat coming up the creek now," thought June, and sped off across the field. Now and then she stumbled and nearly fell. Her sunbonnet felt unbearably warm, and she pulled it off, holding it in her hand as she ran. Once or twice she stopped for a moment, thinking she could not go on. Then there would flash through her thoughts the stories of all the hardship and suffering borne by the men of the American Army, and she ran valiantly on.

Half the distance to the plantation was achieved when the loud call of a screech-owl, twice repeated, fell upon her ears.

"If I can answer it! Oh, if I only can!" thought the little girl remembering that Mrs. Tirrell had told her that three calls meant: "Danger! Help needed."

Standing absolutely still June drew a long breath, and then did her best to imitate the call. Three times the shrill mournful notes sounded through the quiet air. Then she waited alert for some response that might tell her help was at hand, and a moment later it came; one long call.

June repeated the three calls as she walked on

toward the direction from which had come the answer. And just as she began to fear that the person who had called would fail to discover her whereabouts, there was a rustle in the underbrush that skirted the field she was crossing, and Kirke's familiar figure came toward her.

He had evidently been running at great speed; as he discovered June, sunbonnet in hand, coming across the field he called to her in an angry voice:

"What do you mean by using that call? Do you think it a fine game to make sport of an American soldier!"

"There are redcoats, four of them, at the top of that slope; behind the cedars. I'll show you where they are. 'Tis not a game! They are eating there. Four horses ——" responded June, too excited and fearful to notice his angry words, and exclaiming joyfully as Mundy appeared close behind Kirke: "You can capture them! I'm sure you can if you hurry," and, tired and so nearly exhausted that she feared she could not make the journey back, June turned valiantly toward the distant cedars, with Kirke and Mundy running beside her.

As they went on June managed to tell them

the story of her morning adventure, to which the men listened in evident amazement.

"Well, you have done a good day's work whatever happens. You have saved the Tirrell plantation, and that means a lot more for the American cause than you're likely to understand," declared Kirke.

"'Twas as clever a trick as Marion himself could have planned," said Mundy, "and he shall know of it, little maid."

But June was hardly conscious of their words of praise. She could think only of the possibility that the raiders might vanish before Kirke and Mundy could make any plan for their capture.

As they neared the place where June had concealed herself behind the cedars they began to move more cautiously. There was no sound of voices; but they could hear the movements of the horses and knew the men were there.

"Great luck if they're asleep," whispered Mundy, motioning to June to stay where she had seated herself near the cedars.

"They are," said June softly, "every one of them. Look!" and her companions peered through the thicket, and smiled and nodded their response.

They quickly made their plan to capture the sleeping men.

"You'll have to help, little maid. We must get those guns first of all; then the horses. If we can do that before they awake we'll have the best of the game," whispered Kirke; and it was decided that June should creep toward the grey horse, loosen his halter and lead him down the field, while Mundy and Kirke took possession of the rifles that the men had left standing against a tree.

All this was managed so quietly that the sleeping men were not disturbed; and Mundy loosened the three remaining horses, all of which moved slowly after the grey.

June had been bidden to stay with the grey horse, and, in case of the failure of their plan, she was to mount and ride toward the plantation.

But Kirke and Mundy were too well accustomed to such adventures not to take every possible precaution against failure. Not only were the guns and horses out of reach, should the sleeping men suddenly awake, but Mundy managed to slip a long rope about their feet in such a fashion that when one of them should start to his feet he would draw the rope tightly about the others.

"They're as good as Marion's prisoners this minute," he chuckled.

As if the very whisper of Marion's name was enough to awaken them two of the redcoats started up, only to fall flat as the rope tightened and to find two men, gun in hand, facing them.

They quickly realized the folly of trying to escape. Kirke and Mundy bound them securely. And leaving Kirke to guard the prisoners, Mundy mounted one of the horses and rode to where June stood beside the grey.

"All fast and safe," he told her, "and now I'll take you and these horses back to the plantation. You'd best ride with me; we'll lead the others," and the tired little girl was glad enough to be lifted to the saddle in front of Mundy, and to know that the hazardous adventure was safely over.

Mundy was in the best of spirits over the capture. He told June that he was to leave the horses at the plantation, and return to Kirke.

"We know a better plan than to ride about this part of the country with four redcoats. As soon as dusk comes we'll put them in a boat and paddle down the creek. Marion will be glad of a few extra prisoners to exchange for our own soldiers," he said.

Nor did he fail to praise June's courage.

"By good rights you should have a medal from Congress for this day's work," he declared, as they turned into a familiar path and rode to the rear of the Tirrell house.

Mrs. Tirrell, Marty and Bob came running to meet them, and June was lifted from the saddle and, with Mrs. Tirrell's arm about her, hurried into the house before Mrs. Tirrell would listen to a word of Mundy's story.

"If the child has not a sunstroke 'tis a marvel," she declared anxiously, as she led June to the upper chamber, bathed her flushed face, and bade Marty bring a bowl of bread and milk and a dish of strawberries.

Not until the little girl had finished these, and was comfortably in bed in the cool room did Mrs. Tirrell leave her. Then she went downstairs and heard Mundy's story of June's adventure.

"It was surely a day of good fortune that brought the child to this house," she said, as he finished, "and you may well call her brave. I'd well like those redcoats to know that a little American maid got the best of them."

"Kirke is probably telling them about it this very hour," he replied.

CHAPTER VIII

"LEO" AND "BOBBIN"

JUNE was quite willing to remain in bed for the remainder of the day. Although she had escaped sunstroke, she was so thoroughly exhausted that she could think of nothing so pleasant as to rest quietly in Mrs. Tirrell's room.

She slept for a couple of hours, and awakened to find her kind friend drawing a small table near the bed.

"Marty will bring us up our supper. I thought I'd have mine with you," said Mrs. Tirrell, and June nodded and smiled, as she drew herself up in bed and Mrs. Tirrell put a big pillow behind the little girl.

Marty quickly appeared with the supper tray. June was still thirsty, and the glass pitcher filled with the juice of fresh strawberries, cool water and sugar, seemed the most delicious drink she could possibly imagine. There were tempting slices of cold chicken, warm corncake and honey, and June enjoyed her supper all the more because of Mrs. Tirrell sharing it.

But the little girl's thoughts traveled swiftly to her own mother in far-away Charleston. She wondered what Millicent was doing; if her Grandmother Armstrong had discovered the disappearance of the volume of Milton's Poems; and, most of all, if they had given up searching for her.

"I wish they knew about me; knew I was safe," she said, unconscious that she had spoken her thoughts aloud, and amazed to hear Mrs. Tirrell reply:

"Well, my dear, I reckon they do, for I sent a message to your mother four days ago, saying you were with friends and well cared for; and that as soon as it became possible, you would return to your grandmother's home."

"Oh! Mrs. Tirrell!" and June sat straight up in bed, her dark eyes shining with delight, and smiling as if she had heard the best of good news. "Who took the message?" she questioned eagerly.

"Never mind about that. I am sure it went safely," she said smiling at June's evident pleasure. "Why, we hear news from Charleston more often than Colonel Balfour imagines. There are many people living there still loyal to the cause of American independence, and doing

their best to help General Greene's army," she continued.

"Like my mother!" June proudly declared.

"And like your mother's daughter," rejoined Mrs. Tirrell. "Why, if all our soldiers were as valiant as you have proved yourself to be, June, there would not be a British soldier left in South Carolina."

"I heard the redcoats talking of a fleet that had arrived in Charleston with reënforcements for the British. They said it arrived on June 3rd, and that Lord Rawdon was marching them from Charleston to help the garrison at Ninety-Six," said June.

"Yes, Mundy told me, and 'tis indeed bad news," replied Mrs. Tirrell; and soon after this she bade the little girl good-night.

The fact that Lord Rawdon was rapidly marching his new recruits to attack General Greene's army did not then seem of so much importance to June as did the capture of the four British soldiers.

But the conditions at Ninety-Six, on that June evening in 1781, were indeed unfortunate for the American Army. After they had subdued the greater part of the force opposed to them, and with victory almost within their grasp, they were

obliged to face Lord Rawdon with his reënforcements, and with no hope of new recruits coming to their aid. So that General Greene, after the loss of one hundred and fifty men, was forced to give up the siege against Ninety-Six and retreat across the Saluda River.

Lord Rawdon was now confident that the American troops would leave South Carolina, and divided his army, fixing a detachment at the Congaree River. This news reached General Greene who promptly faced about and gave him battle, driving the British forces from the Congaree.

But the little household on the Tirrell plantation was to hear this news later on. During the days following the capture of the four redcoats no visitors appeared. There was no shriek-owl calling from creek or woodland, and Bob declared that the four horses that June had helped to capture were the finest he had ever seen.

They were kept hidden at the edge of the swamp near the creek. Every day June went to visit them, and the little grey horse seemed to recognize her. He was more gentle than the other three, and June would smooth his silky neck, brush his long mane, and lead him to places where the new grass was more abundant. She

called him " Leo," for a bright star in the evening sky that Mrs. Tirrell had pointed out to her, and began to feel that this little grey horse, that had helped her save the Tirrell plantation and capture the four raiders, was her own property.

Mrs. Tirrell had made another dress for the little girl. This one was of faded blue and white striped cotton, and June liked the green dress much better. The white muslin dress that she had worn on her arrival at the plantation had been carefully mended, washed and ironed, and June declared it looked exactly as it did on that May day when she had left her Grandmother Armstrong's house. The crimson sash had been pressed; and dress and sash lay in the deep lower drawer of a tall chest that stood in one corner of Mrs. Tirrell's chamber.

"All ready for you to put on when you return to Charleston," Mrs. Tirrell had said, adding that of course June could not wear them on the journey.

Mrs. Tirrell often spoke of June's going home as if it might happen any day, so that the little girl had no feeling of being exiled far from home with little chance of return. Nevertheless, she well understood that her journey back to Charleston would be no easy undertaking. She

could never find the way by herself, and the American scouts who came to the Tirrell place were more often found in the opposite direction.

Beside this fact, it would be difficult to persuade one of these men to take charge of a little girl and guard her safely, when he knew that an enemy was constantly on the alert for his own capture, and when he must travel by night with little chance for rest, and uncertain as to even a scant supply of food.

But after the capture of the enemy's horses a new possibility occurred to Mrs. Tirrell. It was that she and June should ride to Charleston. But she said nothing of this for several days. Marty and Bob could be trusted to guard the place while she was away, and June had proven that she had sufficient courage for any undertaking.

"Lead the little grey up to the house this morning, June," she said, a few days after the capture of the horses. "Take his bridle along, if you think he'll let you slip it on."

"Oh, I can do that easily enough," declared June, "but he'll follow me now. I have to send him back every day, and the big brown horse follows 'Leo.'"

"Well, if the brown horse wants to come

along don't send him back," said Mrs. Tirrell; and June ran off to ask Bob for "Leo's" bridle, and was soon making her way along the edge of the woodland, past the feeding sheep, then through a thick growth of cedar trees to the swamp-like pasture where the horses were kept.

June now felt quite at home on this lonely plantation. "It's like a visit, because I'm not lost, and Mother knows I am safe," she thought happily, humming to herself the song that she heard Kirke and Mundy sing:

"'Let us go to the woods,' says Richard to Robin,
'Let us go to the woods,' says Robin to Bobbin,'"

and stopped to say: "I'll call the brown horse 'Bobbin.' He bobs when he trots, so it's just the name for him," and she smiled with satisfaction at discovering so good a name for "Leo's" companion.

As she pushed through the undergrowth beyond the cedars June stopped to admire the masses of wild roses that bordered the woodland. Their vines had climbed and twisted themselves about the trunk of a dead tree so that it seemed like a tall vase filled with flowers. The fragrance of wild jasmine mingled with the scent of the

roses; and it seemed to June that there were birds in every tree and bush.

"I'm glad my name is 'June,'" she thought happily, as she looked about for the grey horse. A whinny of greeting, and the soft pad of his hoofs as he came running toward her made her think that the task of slipping the bridle over his head would be an easy one. But "Leo" evidently preferred his freedom, and it proved to be more of an undertaking than June had expected. "Bobbin" persisted in circling about them, as if he thought this a game in which he should play a part, so that by the time the grey horse was bridled June was flushed and tired.

But once bridled "Leo" was quite ready to walk soberly along beside his new mistress, and "Bobbin" followed. Mrs. Tirrell and Marty were at work in the vegetable plot nearest the house, and both smiled at the sight of June and the two horses. Mrs. Tirrell came to meet them, and "Bobbin" made no objection when she walked beside him, clasping his mane.

"How would you like to take a ride, June?" she suggested, as they led the horses under an open shed that was nearly concealed from sight by great clumps of dogwood and wild laurel.

"Both of us?" June questioned eagerly.

"Why, yes! I am sure I can ride this brown horse ——"

"His name is 'Bobbin,'" interrupted June.

"'Bobbin,'" repeated Mrs. Tirrell, smilingly, "and you have ridden the grey. Now, we will see if we can saddle them," and she brought out "Bobbin's" saddle and bridle and, with June's help, soon had the brown horse ready to mount. "My old side-saddle will be better for you, June. That is if 'Leo' doesn't object to it," she said.

The little grey horse was easily saddled. Leading him to the horse-block near the side-door of the house June mounted quickly, and exclaimed with surprise to see Mrs. Tirrell mount the brown horse without trouble.

"I have ridden all sorts of horses ever since I was a little girl," Mrs. Tirrell explained, "and I don't believe 'Bobbin' will be troublesome. We'll go slowly until we are better acquainted with these horses."

June laughed as she remembered how she had raced the grey horse across the rough fields, clinging to the saddle, without a thought of fear.

Mrs. Tirrell led the way through a path that twisted and curved among underbrush and entered a forest of tall pines, and then came out into a rough road.

"We'll follow this a little way, and then turn toward the creek," said Mrs. Tirrell, carefully watching the little girl who seemed quite at home in the saddle. As they left the roadway and the open field permitted them to ride side by side, Mrs. Tirrell began to speak of her plan to take June home.

"We would have to start late some afternoon and ride most of the night. We could not stand riding under the burning sun of noonday; and, beside the heat, we might encounter British raiders who would not let two horses like these escape their clutches. We'd rest and sleep during the day; and, with good luck, we would be in sight of Charleston by the morning of the second day. What do you think of such a journey, June?"

For a moment June was too surprised to speak. Then she exclaimed:

"Oh! 'Tis splendid. Will we start to-night?"

"No. But we will begin our preparations to-day. Perhaps to-morrow afternoon, toward twilight, we can be off," replied Mrs. Tirrell; and they now turned the horses toward home, as Mrs. Tirrell explained all the preparations that must be made for their journey.

"I must learn that poem!" June declared, as they dismounted, and Bob came running to unsaddle the horses and lead them off to some secure hiding place.

Mrs. Tirrell looked at the little girl, not understanding her meaning; and, as they entered the house, June explained that her Grandmother Armstrong had selected a poem for her to commit to memory.

"She bade me be ready to repeat it to her that night. But when night came I was in the boat on the Ashley River with Kirke and Mundy; and I hadn't had a chance to learn it. But if I can say it the very first time Grandma sees me I know 'twill please her," June soberly declared; and added thoughtfully: "I reckon that's why I brought the book along. I knew I'd have to learn it some time."

Mrs. Tirrell smiled as she watched the little girl take off the faded sunbonnet, and go in search of the book to which she had clung during her flight from Charleston.

She had given June a warm welcome to her home, and had done all that was possible for the little girl's comfort and safety. And June's cleverness and courage had undoubtedly saved the house from being discovered by Tarleton's

raiders, and helped in the capture of the redcoats and their horses.

"'Tis all I can do for June, to take her safely home," thought Mrs. Tirrell, resolved to face all the dangers of such an undertaking for the sake of the little girl who had so valiantly protected the plantation.

June promptly began to learn the poem. As she went about the house that day she repeated over and over to herself the opening lines:

> "'Now the bright morning star, day's harbinger,
> Comes dancing from the East, and leads with her
> The flow'ry May ——'"

But June's thoughts were too full of the adventurous journey so close at hand to fix them on learning a poem.

There was food to be cooked, and to pack carefully for them to eat on the journey; and June's few possessions, the white dress and sash, the black gown, bonnet and veil, and the book of poems, were wrapped securely in a small package, ready to fasten to the saddle.

"I want you to sleep late to-morrow morning, June," Mrs. Tirrell said, as, in the late afternoon, she and June wandered about the place for the little girl to take her last look at the friendly

lambs, the fat pigs, and the prosperous flocks of young chickens.

The June day was fragrant with the scent of pine trees, and many flowering shrubs; and as they walked toward the creek and June recalled the morning of her arrival she realized more fully than ever before that she had indeed been fortunate when Kirke and Mundy had brought her to this secluded plantation.

"And," continued Mrs. Tirrell, "it will be best for you to keep quiet during the day, for we shall start on our journey in the cool of the afternoon and ride until late, and we must be rested and ready for our long ride."

"I'll learn the poem," June responded, "because of course I couldn't learn it on the way back to Charleston."

Mrs. Tirrell smilingly agreed; and as they turned back to the house Mrs. Tirrell told June that it was possible Mundy or Kirke might come that night for the two horses that were in the enclosure at the edge of the swamp.

"So if you hear 'screech-owls' calling do not be disturbed by it," she said. "'Leo' and 'Bobbin' will be safe in the shed, and to-morrow at this time we shall be on our way to Charleston."

CHAPTER IX

BOUND FOR CHARLESTON

JUNE slept soundly on her last night at the Tirrell plantation, and no unusual sounds disturbed the quiet. It was evident that the American scouts had been detained, for the captured horses were feeding peacefully in their usual pasture.

The day seemed very long to June. She did her best to learn the beautiful lines of the poem, and when she and Mrs. Tirrell sat down at the small table, near an open window in the dining-room, for their last meal before starting on their ride to Charleston, the little girl declared that she was sure she could repeat every word of it.

Marty had prepared an unusually good supper for them. There was an omelet, beaten up so lightly and so delicately browned that June looked at it admiringly. There were hot corn rolls, and baked sweet potatoes, and a delicious custard. The negro girl served them with so mournful a face, that June realized that Marty was sorry indeed to have her leave the

plantation, and, nodding her head reassuringly, she said:

"Marty, I am coming back! Mrs. Tirrell says I may, for a real visit," and although Marty managed to smile at this announcement, it was evident that it did little to cheer her despondent spirits.

June was wearing the green dress and faded sunbonnet, and the worn leather sandals. All her other belongings were neatly tied up in a package; all, that is, excepting the crimson sash. For June had decided she would give that to Marty as a parting offering.

She had nothing for Bob, but she resolved to send him a gift at the first opportunity, and asked him what he would like best.

But the smiling Bob only shook his head at this question.

"I reckon dare's nuthin' I wants, Missie. Yo' save dis place fer us, an' dat's de bes' gif'," he soberly responded.

Mrs. Tirrell gave her final cautions to the two faithful servants, saw June safely mounted on the little grey horse, and they were ready to start, and in a few moments, as June turned for a backward glance, the house was already hidden behind its protecting trees and shrubs.

At first their way led along forest paths, or across fields, for Mrs. Tirrell well knew that if they were seen by any Tory scout, or by some party of lawless men, neither Tories nor Americans, but seeking plunder wherever they could secure it, they would lose their horses and be left to reach home as best they could.

The long twilight of the June evening did not deepen to dusk until some hours after their departure from the plantation, and it was nearly ten o'clock before Mrs. Tirrell turned "Bobbin" into a rough but well-traveled road, and bade June set "Leo" to his fastest pace.

Their progress so far had been very slow. The rough paths by which they had come made it necessary to go carefully, and, beside that, Mrs. Tirrell had been as cautious as possible. Now, with an open road before them, she meant to ride as swiftly as possible until reaching a place where they could leave the highway and camp for the night.

"We'll turn here," said Mrs. Tirrell, after "Leo" and "Bobbin" had covered several miles at a good pace, and she swung "Bobbin" quickly into a shadowy path that opened from the highway.

Under the shade of the forest trees the dark-

ness deepened, and the horses moved slowly and carefully. At last in a tiny clearing they came to a halt.

"We'll rest here," said Mrs. Tirrell, as she swung herself from the saddle, and helped June dismount.

"I didn't know I was tired, but I am!" declared June, stumbling a little as she endeavored to help Mrs. Tirrell unsaddle the horses.

"I have been here before, and there's a brook through these woods. You stay here, June. I'll lead the horses for a drink."

"I'm thirsty, too," said June.

"Then come along," laughed Mrs. Tirrell, and June following close behind "Leo," made her way between the tall trees to the border of a small brook.

Mrs. Tirrell had not forgotten that their horses must be well fed during their journey, and on their return to the clearing June discovered that the bag attached to her saddle carried oats, which "Leo" and "Bobbin" welcomed eagerly.

The thick moss proved an excellent bed, and they needed no covering. June was glad indeed to curl up beside Mrs. Tirrell and was quickly asleep. But she was quickly awakened. The

shrill cry of the screech-owl echoed through the forest, and June sat up, listening to hear it repeated.

"One call means to ask if it's safe to advance; two means all is well, and three help needed," she whispered to herself, waiting intently, and wondering if this call meant that Mundy or Kirke were near at hand.

Mrs. Tirrell slept on until the call came again; a long mournful noise that seemed in some way different from those June remembered, and she clutched Mrs. Tirrell's shoulder, saying:

"The 'screech-owl.' Oh, Mrs. Tirrell, wake up!"

Instantly Mrs. Tirrell was wide awake.

"It has called twice," whispered June, and at that moment it sounded again, three long calls.

"Shall I answer back?" asked June, for she had learned to imitate the call so cleverly that Mrs. Tirrell and Marty both declared they could not do it as well.

"Wait!" responded Mrs. Tirrell. And even as she spoke the three calls again sounded. "'Tis beyond the brook. It may be the scouts who planned to reach our house last night, and that they have been captured," said Mrs. Tir-

rell, starting in the direction of the brook. "No! Do not call," she added, as June was about to echo the piercing notes.

Very cautiously they made their way through the shadowy woods, stopping now and then to listen. But no further sound came to guide them. It was an easy matter to cross the shallow brook, and almost at once they found themselves in an open clearing.

It was June whose sharp glance first discovered a number of moving dark shadows grouped under a live oak tree near the center of the clearing.

"Look!" she whispered, clutching at Mrs. Tirrell's dress, and drawing quickly back against the underbrush, as her ears caught the sound of the jingle of bridle-reins and the stamping of horses secured near by.

For a few moments they both stood almost breathless, listening intently, their eyes fixed on the shadowy group, with nothing to tell them if these men were friends or enemies. To advance another step might mean instant capture.

"I could creep along the edge of the wood, Mrs. Tirrell, and get behind the tree without being seen. I'm sure I could. May I?" whispered June.

Mrs. Tirrell quickly agreed to this.

"I fear 'tis a party of British scouts who have captured some of Marion's men. Find that out, June. I'll wait for you here. Do not make a sound unless they discover you," she said.

Instantly June seemed to disappear in the deeper darkness that lay along the edge of the woodland. Her leather sandals made not the faintest sound as, crouching as low as possible, she ran forward circling the big live oak, and was soon at a point beyond it.

Here the little girl stopped to listen, and to peer through the soft darkness of the summer night, and then ran swiftly toward the dark shade of the tree, confident that the men were all on its other side.

As she ran she could hear the sound of their voices, and her hope that they might prove to be a scouting party of General Greene's army, or perhaps even Kirke and Mundy, instantly vanished. "They are surely Tarleton's raiders," she told herself, and reaching the big tree pressed herself closely against its rough trunk, so that in the darkness anyone might have almost brushed against her without discovery.

In a moment June knew that Mrs. Tirrell's fears were right, and that this party had captured

two American scouts. Evidently they had not been long in the clearing, and were now settling down for rest and sleep, well pleased with themselves over so lucky an encounter.

"No need of a guard here. There's not a rebel within miles," she heard one of them declare.

"I've a mind to send a shot or two into this tree. That night-owl is surely ready to hoot his head off the minute we are asleep," said another, and June feared to hear the explosion that might follow these words.

"Don't waste good shot," came the reply. "You might well bring a whole troop of men upon us."

She overheard further conversation regarding the prisoners they had captured, and discovered that they were securely bound, hand and feet.

"Oh! Why don't they go to sleep," whispered June, as the two men nearest the tree continued their talk. She heard them say that Lord Rawdon was moving his forces nearer Charleston, and that the Americans would soon give up the fight against superior forces.

"Why, the American soldiers are in rags; and if we can discover the plantations that raise food for them we'll soon starve them out," said one.

There was no response to this. A deeper quiet settled over the clearing. The raiders, tired after hours in the saddle, and confident of the safety of the two men they had captured, were fast asleep.

It seemed a long time to the little girl, crouching in the darkness, before she was sure they were really asleep. But at last she ventured to move cautiously around the tree, and could see the forms of six men, all apparently fast asleep. Creeping noiselessly forward June discovered that the two prisoners were very near the trunk of the live oak, while their captors lay in a half-circle beyond them.

She now dropped to her knees and moved toward the prisoners. A quick movement of the head of the man nearest to her made June realize that he was wide awake, watching her intently. But not even a whispered word told of this until she gently touched his shoulder. "Feet! Untie rope," he whispered. June made no response. Her fingers quickly found the cord twisted about the man's legs and ankles, the knots closely drawn. It was no easy matter to loosen them, to draw the cord away so that the man could move his feet, but she managed to accomplish it, and crept along to his companion as the first man si-

lently vanished behind the tree. To untie the knots that held the second prisoner proved less difficult, and in a few moments he, too, could move his feet.

June moved swiftly around to the other side of the tree, followed by the released prisoners; and here she nearly undid all the results of her efforts to set the men free; for, had not a whispered word warned her, she would have exclaimed: "Mrs. Tirrell!"

For June's long absence had alarmed her friend and she had come in search of her, and had reached the oak tree just as Kirke, his hands still closely bound, appeared beside her.

She had untied the rope, and now did the same service for Mundy. No one spoke until they had recrossed the brook.

"You would best re-saddle and be off," Kirke warned them. "Ride until the sun is well up, then camp again. We'll make for the plantation, get the two horses, and be off. They'll not catch us again," he said, as he saddled the horses, and helped Mrs. Tirrell to mount.

As he lifted June to her saddle he said:

"The best thing I ever did was to bring you to Tirrell plantation, little maid. I can do

naught for you; but you must not forget what your courage has done for Marion's men."

"Why, of course I had to try and help," responded June.

Kirke patted the grey horse. "Keep the little grey for your own; you have earned him. A present from Marion's men," he said; and with a quick word of farewell the two scouts disappeared in the shadowy woods.

"We must ride our best to-night, June, and put as many miles between those British soldiers and ourselves as possible," said Mrs. Tirrell, as they regained the highway.

Their horses had had several hours' rest and went on at a good pace. The night air was cool, although already the eastern sky was brightening with the advance of dawn, and Mrs. Tirrell urged "Bobbin" forward, and June's little grey kept pace with him. Not until the sun was above the horizon did they leave the road. This time they turned into so narrow a path that the horses had almost to push their way through.

This part of the ride seemed to June the most difficult of all this adventurous journey. Branches struck against her legs, and she leaned far forward against "Leo's" neck to avoid the clutch of drooping vines and the slap of the limbs

of trees. The morning air grew warm, and she gave an exclamation of pleasure when, clear of path and underbrush, they reached the bank of a woodland pool in the centre of a deep wood, where Mrs. Tirrell drew rein.

After the horses had been fed and watered and securely fastened, Mrs. Tirrell opened their package of food, the first they had tasted since leaving the plantation, and then they stretched out in the welcome shade and were almost instantly asleep.

It was well past noon when they awoke.

"We will stay here until dusk," said Mrs. Tirrell. "There is grass and water for the horses, and we need to rest."

"I'd like to go wading in that pool," suggested June.

"Why not?" Mrs. Tirrell promptly agreed. "I can think of nothing I'd like better myself," and in a few moments they were both wading along the edge of the little pond.

Marty had provided them with plenty of corn bread, strawberry jam, and hard-boiled eggs, and as they sat in the shade of a wide-leafed catalpa eating with good appetite, June almost forgot the perils of the previous night.

The long hours of the afternoon drifted pleas-

antly by. June repeated the poem she had learned, and Mrs. Tirrell said she wished that she had learned it herself. No sound came to alarm them or to make them realize how near some hostile force might be, and at twilight they saddled the horses, and made ready to continue their journey; and, as they rode slowly along, Mrs. Tirrell spoke of her plan for June to enter Charleston unquestioned.

"I can't go with you; I must turn homeward as soon as we are within sight of the city," she said, "and for a little maid to come riding into town at early dawn might make some guard unduly suspicious. So ——"

"Oh, Mrs. Tirrell! You mean I am to put on the black dress and veil?" interrupted June, fairly bouncing in her saddle. "I was wishing I could do that. I'll walk right up the front steps and ask Glenn if Mrs. Lambert and Mrs. Armstrong would like to see a relative who has just arrived from the country. He'll never know me. 'Tis a splendid plan."

Mrs. Tirrell smiled at the little girl's eagerness. She hoped the remainder of their journey might pass without adventure, and that she could start homeward before dawn; but she well knew

that any turn of the shadowy road might bring them face to face with a relentless enemy.

But she said nothing of these fears to June; and when at midnight, after they had rested for several hours near a deserted plantation, she awakened the little girl and told her that an hour's ride would take her safely home, Mrs. Tirrell was confident there was little to fear.

"Remember to tell your grandma that the grey horse was the gift of the friends who brought you to my plantation," she cautioned June, "for as your grandmother is a Tory she would want to give 'Leo' back to the British."

"I'll remember," June promised, "and when may I come and see you again? And when will you come and see me?" she asked eagerly, wishing she could find words to say how grateful she was to this kind woman.

"We will surely meet again. As soon as the British are driven from South Carolina we will meet often," promised Mrs. Tirrell.

With a few words of caution to the little girl they said good-bye, and June rode on along the now familiar way to Charleston.

CHAPTER X

" A COUNTRY RELATIVE "

JUNE's thoughts were so centered on the fact that she would soon see her mother again, and of all that she would have to tell her, and on her plan to appear at her grandmother's door disguised as " a relative from the country," that she hardly realized she had said good-bye to the kind and loyal Mrs. Tirrell. It was not until several days had passed, and the excitement of her home-coming was over, that the little girl recalled all that had been done for her at the plantation, and wished she might tell Mrs. Tirrell that she would always remember it.

But now riding along a familiar road with Charleston near at hand, June fairly bubbled over with good spirits. She sang snatches of familiar songs, repeated lines of poetry, and wished she might start " Leo " into a faster pace. But Mrs. Tirrell had warned her that a lady wearing a full-skirted black dress and a bonnet with a long veil would naturally prefer to ride at a sober trot, and June smiled with delight as she pictured to herself Glenn's amazement when he

discovered that she was not the elderly person her dress indicated.

It was broad daylight when "Leo" trotted down Broad Street. Only negro servants were abroad at this hour, although one or two red-coated guards lounged sleepily along near the British headquarters. But these hardly glanced at the little black figure on the grey horse. Women from the country were constantly coming and going, and June rode along the familiar street toward her Grandmother Armstrong's house in perfect safety.

The front door was wide open to let in the cool morning air, and Glenn came through the hall toward the porch just as the little grey horse stopped at the wide steps.

Glenn fairly gasped at the appearance of the remembered figure of the "Witch woman." For a brief second he stood quite still; then, with a yell that brought Cindy, Mandy and Roselinda hurrying to the front of the house, and that awakened Mrs. Armstrong, he fairly leaped across the porch and down the steps.

"Whar young Missie June?" he demanded, seizing "Leo's" bridle-rein. "Yo' shuh carry her off, an' yo' tell whar to!" and he glared at the veiled figure as if expecting her to produce

June instantly, while a murmur of voices from the porch proved that the other servants expected no less. For Mandy, Cindy and Roselinda, grouped together in the doorway, were chattering noisily. They had been told by June's mother, several weeks ago, that her little daughter was safe with friendly people. Nevertheless, June's sudden disappearance on the very morning when a queer looking woman had been seen about the place, a woman who had vanished as mysteriously as June herself, convinced the servants that the strange visitor had carried off their young mistress.

And here was the very woman. Mounted on a fine grey horse and riding straight up to Mistress Armstrong's front door! Mandy and Cindy gasped at Glenn's daring words. But Roselinda's sharp eyes seemed to detect something familiar in the visitor.

"H'ar dat?" she whispered to Cindy. "She tell Glenn dat she be a rel'tive from de country. An' dar be a kind ob natural look 'bout her. Listen. She say Missie June comin' dis bery day!" and eager and smiling the little group pressed forward for a closer look at this visitor who had suddenly become the most welcome of guests.

Glenn, deeply troubled to have greeted a relative of the family so rudely, besought her to pardon him.

"Jus' let me 'sist yo' ter dismount, Mistress," he urged, "and Cindy'll be off ter tell Mistress Armstrong dat yo' is arrive."

June, the veil still drawn over her face, could hardly keep back her laughter. It had all worked out so exactly as she had planned. And now she was quite ready to make herself known.

Throwing back the veil she smiled down at Glenn, who started back so suddenly that he nearly lost his balance, exclaiming: "Witchwork! Dat's wot 'tis." While Mandy and Cindy stared at June as if they could hardly believe this was really their young mistress.

"Take me down, Glenn. I want to see my mother, and I'm hungry," said June, suddenly tired of her game, and of Roselinda's exclamations as the negro girl ran down the steps toward her.

Glenn quickly obeyed, well pleased to make sure that this queer person was really June; and the little girl smiled at them all in such evident delight as they gathered around her exclaiming and welcoming her home, that they forgot for the moment all the trouble she had caused them.

"Take off this awful dress and bonnet, Roselinda," June commanded as she managed to reach the hall.

Chuckling and chattering Roselinda promptly obeyed, and June, wearing the white dress, stockings and slippers, stepped out of the billowing black skirt and said:

"There! You all see I'm just the same. I dressed up and went visiting. And now I am home, and that's all there is to it."

"Yas'm, Missie June. But whose fine grey horse be dat a-standin' at our front door?" questioned Glenn.

"Oh! 'Leo'! He's mine, Glenn. My friends gave him to me. You take good care of him," responded June, and was off up the stairs toward her mother's room.

Mrs. Armstrong had been awakened by the unusual commotion, and as June ran up the wide staircase she met her grandmother coming down. Mrs. Armstrong was too happy at the sight of June to ask a question. She hurried the little girl toward her mother's room, declaring that this was the happiest day she had known since June's departure.

"You shall tell me all about it, dearest child. But now your mother must see you. Valentine!

Here is your wandering child!" she called softly to June's mother, and the next instant June was in her mother's arms.

But Grandma Armstrong was not to hear the whole story of June's adventures at the Tirrell plantation for many a day. Nor did Mrs. Lambert ask the little girl any questions that morning, for June was too tired to do anything but sleep. It was mid-afternoon before she awakened. As she opened her eyes and gazed about the familiar room for a moment she believed herself dreaming. Then, with a little sigh of satisfaction, she realized that she was really and truly safely at home.

Millicent had heard the wonderful news of her cousin's safe return, she had seen the little grey horse, and had more than once peered eagerly through the door of Mrs. Lambert's room hoping to find June awake and to hear of all that had befallen her. But not until twilight did the cousins meet.

By that time June had told her mother all that happened. Mrs. Lambert listened in amazement as June described her encounter with Kirke and Mundy, the arrival at the remote plantation, and the capture of Tarleton's raiders. Then, as she described the journey to Charleston, and the

manner in which Kirke and Mundy had been rescued from their captors, Mrs. Lambert began to think that her little daughter had indeed proved herself a heroine.

"And Kirke said I had earned the grey horse; and I am to keep it to remember them by," concluded June.

They both agreed that neither Mrs. Armstrong nor Millicent could be told of Marion's men, nor of June's part in the capture of the British soldiers.

" Sometime, when the British leave the state, when Earl Cornwallis has surrendered to General Washington, and America is a free and independent country, your grandmother shall hear of all her little granddaughter's courage; and she will be proud indeed, June," her mother assured her.

" When will that be, Mother? "

" Before many months. Lord Rawdon has been driven from almost all of his posts. 'Tis said he means soon to sail for England. By this time next year, June, we can tell Grandma that you were as real a soldier as any of Marion's men."

" A year is a long time," said June.

Her mother had told her of Millicent's loyalty

regarding the message to General Moultrie, and that Mrs. Armstrong had believed it a matter of no importance. So when Millicent came running into Mrs. Lambert's room, where the two little girls were to have their evening meal together, June was completely happy. Millicent had not broken The Vow, and they were the best of friends.

There were many things she could tell Millicent that had happened during her visit to the Tirrell plantation—things that amused and delighted her cousin; but June was very careful not to speak of the place as a refuge for Marion's men, or to tell of the help and aid given to American scouts. She wished she could tell Millicent the story of the capture of the grey horse, and of the rescue of Kirke and Mundy, but Mrs. Tirrell had warned her not to mention these things to anyone except her mother.

The day after June's return she was told something that made her forget for the time all her own adventures.

"You don't know what is going to happen to me, Junie. You could never guess!" Millicent declared, as she came dancing along the upper balcony where June was sitting. "Grandma said I might tell you to-day," she continued,

whirling about on one foot, as if too excited to keep still.

Both the cousins were again dressed alike. Their dresses, on this July morning of 1781, were of pale green muslin—just the color, as June recalled, of the faded cotton gown she had worn on the Tirrell plantation. There were rows of lace-edged ruffles around the bottom of the full skirts, and they both wore fine white stockings and low-cut slippers.

June was swinging back and forth in the hammock, and she smiled at her cousin's eagerness as she responded:

"I reckon I do know, Millie. Grandma is going to have a party for us."

Millicent laughed delightedly as she endeavored to balance herself on one toe, and then with a little jump seated herself beside her cousin.

"Oh! Yes! A party! But it's a lot more important than that!" she declared, and laughed gaily at June's look of surprise. "Maybe you'll be sorry, June! Anyway I hope you will," she continued more soberly, "because it means that we won't see each other for months and months. Because I am going to England. My father and mother are not coming back to this country,

and Mr. and Mrs. Wragg are to sail for London on one of the King's ships, and I am to go with them."

For a moment June stared at her cousin as if she could hardly believe it possible that Millie was to sail away from Charleston to far-off England. She knew that many of the people of South Carolina, as well as of the other American states, had declared themselves as loyal subjects of King George the Third, and a number of her Grandma Armstrong's friends had gone to live in England, but that Millicent should go seemed almost impossible to believe.

The two little girls gazed at each other soberly, but a little smile lurked about Millicent's lips.

"Betty and Leila are going, too. Oh! June! I do wish you were," she said, throwing her arm about her cousin's shoulders. "There are no wars in England," she went on, "because everybody is loyal to the King, and ——"

June drew away from Millie's friendly arm.

"Who is coming to our party?" she asked, telling herself that, no matter what Millicent might say or do for the remainder of the time they would be together, she would not quarrel with her.

"Oh, Betty and Leila, and Florence Carter and Adrienne Lamont, and any girls we want to ask. Grandma says 'tis for us both, June. For you, because you were lost and then came safely home, and for me because I am going away," replied Millicent, and then quickly added: "Mandy is to make cakes and cream puffs, and we are to have the drawing-room, just as Grandma does when she has company."

"Of course," June responded; but she was not really thinking about the party. She was thinking of Millicent's evident delight in the fact that she was to sail away to England.

"Junie, don't you suppose you could think up a fine game to play at our party? A different game from any we've ever played," questioned Millicent.

"Maybe," June rejoined thoughtfully, and then exclaimed: "Yes! I know I can. I have thought of a splendid one!"

"Oh, Junie!" and Millicent jumped up and pulled June up with her. "What is it? I knew you would think of something."

"I can't tell you now, Millie, because I must ask my mother first, and beside that, I want to think about it, so the other girls won't find it out."

"But you will tell me, won't you, June? Just as soon as ever you can?"

And June promised. "I'll go ask Mother now," she said. "You wait here, Millie, and I'll come back and tell you," and she ran off to find her mother.

Millie sank back into the swaying hammock, wondering what kind of a game it could be that June had to ask permission before she would describe it.

The afternoon was hot, the balcony was quiet, and there was a drowsy murmur of soft bird-notes from the garden, so, as June ran down the stairs to find her mother in the big hallway, and to eagerly tell her plan for a game for the party, Millie dropped off into sound slumber.

Mrs. Lambert listened smilingly to June's proposed game for the amusement of her little guests.

"Why, I see no harm in it," she agreed, "but just what do you mean to call it?"

"I can't think of a name; not a real good one," June replied. "Glenn called me 'witch woman,' but I don't like that. What would you call it, Mother?"

But Mrs. Lambert smilingly shook her head.

"Talk it over with Millicent, my dear. You must think up a name yourself."

"I know! I know! When I am all ready Glenn shall call Millicent into the hall, and she shall lead me in and introduce me as 'a relative from the country.' And that shall be the name!" declared June, and ran back to the upper balcony, awakened Millicent, and described her plan for the entertainment of their guests.

"It's splendid, June!" exclaimed Millicent. "You know Betty and Leila told us about a queer old woman they met on Orange Street. Won't it be fun to see them all curtseying to our 'relative from the country,' and never imagining that it's you," and the little girls laughed gleefully, quite forgetting how near was the time of Millie's departure.

CHAPTER XI

AN UNEXPECTED GUEST

THE day set for the party was the last Thursday in July, and the young guests were invited to arrive at five in the afternoon. At that hour the extreme heat of the day lessened, and the girls could play in the garden, and enjoy the cool balconies, or "galleries," as they were called by Charleston people.

June and Millicent, in white muslin dresses, their dark curls tied back with white ribbons, were ready in good season to receive their guests. They stood in the wide doorway of the drawing-room that opened into the big hall. Glenn had been instructed that each arrival was to be announced by name; and, exactly at five, Betty and Leila Wragg, who were to be Millicent's companions on her journey to England, attended by their negro "Mammy," came up the steps to be met by the smiling Glenn, while Roselinda and Cindy hovered behind him to take charge of "Mammy."

Then, with a step toward the door of the drawing-room, Glenn, with a flourish of his hand and

a low bow, announced: "De Missie Wraggs," and June and Millicent, Betty and Leila, curtseyed to each other as formally as if at a Governor's reception.

But they were all smiling happily, knowing that all this was but the beginning of a "real" party. Florence Carter was the next to arrive; then came Adrienne Lamont and her twin cousins, Caroline and Cynthia, and last of all Sylvia Parker.

At the announcement of Sylvia's name, and as she stood in the doorway smiling her greeting, the other girls, standing in a half-circle facing her, all curtseyed at the same moment. Mrs. Armstrong and June's mother, looking in from a small room beyond the drawing-room, thought it would indeed be difficult to imagine a prettier sight.

But in a moment the girls were all talking and laughing together. Adrienne Lamont had at once clasped June's hand, saying:

"Oh, June! Are we not to see your pretty grey horse? My brother says 'tis exactly like one that a young British officer used to ride about Charleston."

"June would not own a horse that had ever carried a Tory, would you, June? You are a

'rebel,' aren't you?" said Betty, the elder of the two Wragg sisters.

There was a little sneer in her tone, for the Wraggs were confident that the American army were nothing but rebels. Her father, before Charleston had been taken by the British, had been confined to his plantation by the patriot Council of Safety. For the past year the family had lived in Charleston, rejoicing in the triumph of the British. But now, in the summer of 1781, as General Greene's army was reported to be only sixty miles distant from Charleston, after a series of victories over British outposts, the southern Tories were beginning to feel less confident of a final victory.

And at this time other good tidings for American patriots were not lacking. The King of France had granted a large loan to the American government, which enabled them to continue the war against the British invaders with new courage. Other European nations beside France were showing a friendly spirit toward the Americans, and some of England's statesmen did not hesitate to declare that America's cause was just.

June's mother had talked with her of these things; and June remembered them, and so

Betty's sneering words did not make her forget that the little Tory girl was her guest. She was not even tempted to make a sharp retort, and responded pleasantly:

"Of course you can see 'Leo,' Betty, though I'm sure your white pony is much prettier. If you would all like to see the grey horse, girls, I'll ask Glenn to lead him to the front of the house."

There was a little chorus of approval at this, as much for June's good nature as at the prospect of seeing "Leo," and they all followed June to the front porch, while Glenn hastened off to bring the grey horse.

When Glenn returned, leading the horse that had been groomed until his silky coat shone like silver, Adrienne Lamont ran down the steps to pat "Leo's" smooth neck, that curved so proudly, and declared the grey horse the handsomest one in Charleston. The other girls, all but Betty, who remained on the upper step, followed her.

"Who gave you the horse, June?" asked Leila Wragg; "they must have thought lots of you," she added.

"I hope so," June responded laughingly, evading Leila's question.

MRS. ARMSTRONG AND BETTY LED THE DANCE

"Lift me up to 'Leo's' back, Glenn," commanded Leila; and, in response to June's nod, he obeyed, and then led the daintily stepping grey horse along the driveway, Leila holding "Leo's" mane, and laughing delightedly.

Each of the little visitors demanded their turn for a ride, all save Betty, who persisted in being a little scornful, saying she was sure it would muss her skirts.

As the girls returned to the drawing-room Mrs. Armstrong and Mrs. Lambert came in to greet them. Mrs. Lambert seated herself at the piano and, with a smiling nod at June, began to play "Sir Roger de Coverly." Taking Betty by the hand Mrs. Armstrong led off in the graceful dance, the other girls quickly choosing partners and following her; and as the dance came to an end Glenn announced that supper was served, and Mrs. Lambert played a march to which all the well-pleased guests moved through the wide-arched doors to the dining-room.

June was at one end of the long table and Sylvia at the other, and Glenn and Roselinda began to serve them with the chicken salad, crisp rolls, and dishes of fresh berries. There were crystal glasses filled with fruit punch, custards,

and a variety of cakes, and even Betty forgot to be scornful and superior toward June, and was quite ready to declare this the nicest party she had attended.

After the meal, Millicent and Sylvia led the way to the porch, with the other girls flocking behind them, and the fact that June had slipped away was not noticed. Millicent seemed eager to keep the attention of her young guests centered on herself and the fact that in another week Betty, Leila and she would all be on the high seas bound for England.

"I know a sailor's song," voluntered Sylvia Parker, as they all moved along the path leading to a small summer-house at the end of the garden.

"Oh, Sylvia, sing it!" Millicent instantly demanded; and the other girls grouped about Sylvia, who, with a little laugh, nodded her agreement, and began to sing:

"First know your compass, sail and oar,
Oh! Ho! Brave Sailor.
And then go launch you from the shore,
Oh! Ho! Brave Sailor.
And ere you sail compute the cost
If you and your good ship be lost,
Brave Sailor ——"

Before Sylvia could begin on the second verse of her song, Roselinda came running toward them.

"If yo' please, Missie Millicent, de rel'tive from de country has 'rived," she smilingly announced.

"Oh! Then we must turn back," declared the delighted Millicent, who was eager to see June dressed as an elderly woman, and to watch the other girls and make sure they did not suspect who the "relative" really was.

The guests wondered a little at Millicent's haste to greet this new arrival.

"Who is she, Millicent? Is it a cousin we've never seen?" questioned Betty, looking about now for June, meaning to ask: "Is she a rebel, like you?" but failing to discover her, she ran on after the others.

"Where is she, Glenn?" questioned Millicent, as she ran up the steps.

"De lady am in de drawin'-room, Missie," responded Glenn, as soberly as if announcing the arrival of Colonel Balfour.

Millicent led the way across the wide hall, the other girls close behind her. On the high-backed sofa at the far end of the room sat a slender black-robed figure. The lace bonnet and long

veil, and the shadowy room all helped to disguise her; and Millicent's prompt announcement, "Oh! I am so glad you could come to our party, Cousin," as she ran forward and curtseyed, made her young guests confident that this newcomer had been expected. "These are my friends," continued the delighted Millicent, and one by one she presented the girls, who, in turn, curtseyed and stepped back.

"A great pleasure to see you all," came the "relative's" response, in a queer squeaky voice. "And I am sure all you young ladies are loyal Americans, and look forward to the time when this city will be free from invaders," she continued, much to Millicent's alarm, who feared her grandmother might be near. But Mrs. Armstrong and June's mother had gone to the upper balcony.

Sylvia Parker was the only one to respond to this remark.

"June hopes that, but I reckon the rest of us don't think much about it," she said, with her pleasant laugh.

"I am truly surprised," declared the queer voice. ("Sounds as if she had something in her mouth," whispered Adrienne Lamont to Betty.) "Surely you all know that you have reason to

be proud because South Carolina was the first of the United Colonies to form an independent constitution; and that General Moultrie defeated the first attack the British made on Charleston—Ow—Ow!"

June's oration ended in this smothered exclamation as Millicent managed to give her arm a sharp pinch, reminding her that she was on dangerous ground.

"Excuse me, young ladies; I seem to have a slight cold," she managed to say.

"Where is June Lambert?" Betty whispered to Adrienne, after a sharp glance about the room. "I think this old woman is spoiling the party. I'm going home. She's a regular rebel."

"You can't go, Betty, not when an old lady is talking," Adrienne responded.

"I can, too. My father wouldn't want me to stay. Millie, I reckon Leila and I will go home if you'll call our 'Mammy,'" she announced, turning her back on June and walking toward an open window.

For a moment Millicent was sure that this wonderful party was spoiled, and that it was June's fault, but a little movement from the black-clad figure on the sofa and the cracked voice saying: "Where is that young rebel, June

Lambert? Why is she not here?" made Betty, as well as Millicent, turn quickly to discover that the "relative" was standing up, and lifting her veil.

There was a delighted murmur of voices, instant laughter and exclamations as the girls all crowded about her; and June, slipping out of the black dress, and carefully removing the bonnet and veil, made a low curtsey to her friends.

"I thought I'd dress up, just for fun. And I did fool you all, didn't I?" she said.

"Oh, June! And I was sure you must be forty years old!" laughed Sylvia, and the others declared that they had really believed her to be Millicent's elderly relative.

All but Betty; she had not said a word. Nor did she exchange a word with June until the time came for the young guests to leave, then with a scornful look at June, she said:

"I suppose rebels think it's funny to dress up and wander about Charleston, and then go and tell Marion's men everything they can find out," and with this final word, that none of the others heard, Betty marched off, leaving the astonished June staring after her.

But Millicent declared that all the girls except Betty had enjoyed every minute of their visit.

"What made you begin to talk about General Moultrie, June?" she said, as the two cousins turned from bidding their guests good-bye. "You know it wasn't very polite."

June nodded. Betty's last words had made her very thoughtful. What if some British scout had really discovered her visit to the hidden plantation on the distant creek, and in that way would be able to trace Kirke and Mundy, she thought, fearful for the safety of Mrs. Tirrell and that distant plantation. But June had no need to be anxious; Betty's taunt had been prompted only by the desire to plague the "little American rebel," as the Tory girl scornfully called June. For Betty knew little of Marion's men, and nothing at all of June's adventures during her absence.

On the departure of their guests Millicent had run upstairs, eager to tell her grandmother that June's "game" had been successful. But June lingered in the hallway looking out through the open doorway, and then crossed the porch and seated herself on the upper step, leaning back against one of the tall pillars.

The house servants were gathered in Mandy's kitchen, Mrs. Armstrong, June's mother and Millicent were on the upper balcony, and, for the

moment, there were no sounds to break the quiet of the summer evening. Then, far off, June heard the clear sound of a bugle call, but it did not disturb her. Her thoughts sped away to the house near the quiet creek.

"I wish there was some way I could get news about Mrs. Tirrell," she thought, little imagining how quickly this wish would be fulfilled.

The shadows deepened, and June told herself that she must go in. Then a faint sound from the garden caught her attention. Once, twice, three times came the call of a screech-owl. Not the loud piercing notes that June had first heard when she reached the Tirrell plantation, but low and faint.

Instantly June was on her feet peering intently in the direction from which the sound seemed to come.

"It must be a real owl," she whispered. "I'll call back, anyway," and, in the same low notes, June echoed the screech-owl's cry.

She had hardly finished when a crouching figure darted out from behind a box hedge, ran across the driveway, and stood beside her in the deep shadow of the porch.

"Kirke!" she whispered. "Oh! What is it? Is Mrs. Tirrell in danger?"

"She was safe enough three days ago. Listen, little maid: Balfour's men are at my very heels. If you cannot hide me they'll have me within an hour," he said, adding quickly, "I may have to take your little grey horse to stand even a chance of safety."

"Yes! Yes! He is yours really," declared June, remembering that at any moment her grandmother might come down the stairs for a walk in the garden in the cool of the evening, as she so often did.

"Quick, little maid!" urged Kirke. "I must hide until later in the night. But where?"

June clutched at the ragged sleeve of Kirke's blouse.

"I know. Don't speak or make the least noise," she cautioned; and, with Kirke moving silently beside her, the little girl crossed the porch, entered the hall, and moved silently toward the stairway. As they reached the upper hall the murmur of voices from the balcony could be plainly heard, and June fairly held her breath lest some stumble or awkward movement on her part or Kirke's should betray them. But they reached Mrs. Lambert's chamber in safety, and in a moment June was in the closet.

"Here, 'tis a secret stairway. I've opened the

panel. It goes up through another closet to the roof. Nobody will ever look for you anyway here in my grandma's house," she whispered.

But already Kirke's foot was on the first step of the ladder-like stair. June slid the panel into place, and stepped back into her mother's room just as Millicent called her name.

"Come out on the balcony, June! Hurry. There are some soldiers on horseback coming right up our drive!"

June ran to the gallery and leaned over to watch these unexpected visitors. She was too frightened to speak, knowing that if they had come a moment earlier Kirke's escape would have been impossible.

"I will go down and see what this means," said Mrs. Armstrong. "'Tis strange indeed that Major Fraser permits his soldiers to annoy people in this fashion."

As she started toward the stairway June ran after her. Glenn had lighted the tall candles on the hall table, and as Mrs. Armstrong and June descended the stairs they could see a red-coated officer looking up at them.

He made no excuses for his visit. Although the British had promised protection and safety to all who declared themselves loyal to King

George the Third, Colonel Balfour had by no means lived up to this promise; and now, in the late summer of 1781, many families who had declared their loyalty to the British cause were beginning to sympathize with the Americans. Mrs. Armstrong was one of these; and the young officer's brusque manner of greeting made her inclined to hope that he and all other British soldiers might soon be sent back to their own country.

"May I ask to what we owe the honor of this unexpected visit, sir?" she asked, as she reached the hall.

"I am to search this place for an American rebel soldier, Madam. He was followed to your garden, and he has not had a chance to leave it. Perhaps this little maid can tell us something about him," he concluded, turning his glance toward June, who stood close beside her grandmother, her dark eyes bright with fear.

CHAPTER XII

"BUNCH"

"My men are already searching the gardens and servants' quarters," continued the officer, "and I will go through the house myself."

"With or without my permission, I presume," said Mrs. Armstrong.

"By the authority of the King, Madam!" responded the officer, and Mrs. Armstrong curtseyed at the mention of His Majesty, and, in a less angry tone, replied:

"King George has no more loyal subject than Caroline Armstrong; my house is at his disposal," and, with June close beside her, Mrs. Armstrong led the way through the lower rooms. Then, bidding Glenn light the candles in every room, she turned toward the upper floor.

Mrs. Lambert and Millicent remained quietly on the balcony, as the red-coated officer strode through the rooms, peered under beds, flung open the doors of closets, and bade Glenn hold candles in dusky corners of the galleries.

"My little granddaughters have been entertaining their young friends this afternoon.

They were in the garden, on the porch, and in the rooms of the lower floor until just before your arrival. If anyone had been hiding there he would surely have been discovered," declared Mrs. Armstrong, as the young officer, failing to find any trace of the "rebel," came down the stairs.

June had a moment of terror when they entered her mother's room. What if her grandma should tell this man of the hidden stairway, and open the panel in the closet to show it to him? But this did not even occur to Mrs. Armstrong. That any stranger could possibly know of this means of escape seemed utterly impossible. That her little granddaughter, June, who kept so closely beside her, evidently alarmed and frightened, could have any knowledge of this man for whom the British soldiers were searching, did not enter Mrs. Armstrong's thoughts.

Lanterns flashed here and there in the gardens; Glenn and Roselinda followed the search party to the stables, and came back to the porch declaring that one of the soldiers had wanted to take the grey horse, but the officer had forbidden it.

At last the search party, convinced that the "rebel" had escaped, rode away, and the house-

hold prepared to retire. June and Millicent went to their room, and Millie began at once to wonder about the man for whom the soldiers were searching.

"Do you reckon he escaped, Junie? Wouldn't it be dreadful if he was in this house?"

June hardly heard what her cousin was saying. She was wondering if Kirke could find a way down from the roof, take "Leo," and make his way to safety without being captured. She lay long awake, listening for some sound that might tell of Kirke's movements. But the hours drifted by, and June was sound asleep and did not awake until late the next morning.

Millicent was sitting up in bed as June opened her eyes, and instantly exclaimed:

"Oh, June! Roselinda has come twice to our room, and said to let you sleep, but to call her the instant you opened your eyes. Rose-lin-da! Roselin-da!" she called, and in a moment the negro girl was in the room with the big pitcher of hot water.

"Why, Roselinda! What is the trouble?" asked Millicent, who was instantly out of bed, staring at Roselinda's solemn face.

"Trubble shure 'nuff, Missie," the girl responded, with a deep sigh. "I reckons Missie

June gwine ter feel right bad 'bout dat little hoss."

June was out of bed now; at the mention of the grey horse her face brightened.

"Is he gone?" she demanded, in so hopeful a tone that both Millie and Roselinda stared at her wonderingly, and Millie exclaimed:

"Why, June! You sound just as if you hoped he was."

"Well——" began June, and then stopped suddenly, for she had been about to say that if "Leo" had disappeared it would mean that Kirke had safely escaped.

"Dose sojers las' night say dat de King's men needed hosses like dat one, an' dis mornin' dat hoss be gone. Dey jes' prob'ly comes back and takes him," said Roselinda, and she cast a pitying glance toward June, while Millicent exclaimed:

"Oh, Junie! Maybe Grandma can get him back for you."

But June made no response. She busied herself in brushing her hair and fastening the ribbon ties of her slippers. Roselinda had really given her the very news she was hoping to hear. The fact of "Leo's" disappearance proved that her friend Kirke was on his way to safety.

The excitement about "Leo" soon died away. As June seemed so little troubled over his loss her grandmother made no effort to discover him, and as the time of Millicent's departure was so near at hand all the interest of the household was centered on the little girl who was to cross the Atlantic, and henceforth make her home in England.

As the days fled by, June tried her best to think of some gift that she could bestow on her cousin.

"Something she can always keep to remember me by," she explained to her mother, and Mrs. Lambert grew very thoughtful, and finally asked:

"Well, what one of your possessions does Millicent like best?"

"My pearl locket, Mother. She wore it while I was away, and gave it back to me when I came home," responded June.

Mrs. Lambert smiled at her little daughter, but she did not make any suggestion, and after a moment June continued:

"You know, Mother, 'tis the one you and Father gave me on my tenth birthday, and it has your picture in it."

"I think when your father comes home we

could give you another locket, dear. A locket with both our pictures," she said.

" Oh, Mother! Will you, truly? Then I will give Millie this one. But not 'til the very day she goes on board ' The Fleetwing,' " and June, delighted in the thought of her cousin's surprise, began to plan just what she would say when she bestowed the pearl locket on Millicent. Her pleasant thoughts were interrupted by a question from her mother:

" How would you like to keep the little picture of me for your new locket, June? And put one of yourself in Millicent's? "

" Oh, Mother! Could I! That would be what I'd like best of anything! " declared June. Then her face clouded. " But there isn't any picture of me," she concluded.

" I'll begin one this very hour," said Mrs. Lambert. " Come up to the upper gallery, and I'll fetch my water-colors," and, as pleased as June herself, Mrs. Lambert ran up the stairs with June beside her, and they were quickly established in a secluded corner of the long upper gallery.

Mrs. Lambert made a number of sketches of June that morning, and declared that she could

easily complete the tiny picture for the locket on the following day.

"I'm going to paint portraits when I grow up, Mother," June soberly announced as she watched her mother's clever brush.

"Then you had best begin now, dear. I will give you your first lesson to-day," replied Mrs. Lambert, and June at that moment firmly resolved that she would become an artist. The afternoon hours passed only too swiftly; and when Mrs. Armstrong and Millicent returned from their visit to the Wraggs' June was eager to tell her cousin of her new resolve.

"I am to have a lesson every day, Millie. By the time you come back I can paint a picture of you," she declared.

Millicent listened to June with evident admiration.

"I almost wish I was going to stay here, Junie," she said soberly. "Leila and Betty are not nearly as good-natured as you are. They always want me to do their way, and think they know everything," and Millicent's face betrayed the fact that she had not enjoyed her afternoon visit.

"Never mind if they do, Millie," said June, slipping her arm about her cousin; "you'll not

have to see them if you don't want to after you get to London. And your mother and father will be right there to meet you."

Millicent's face brightened, and she nodded hopefully.

"And you know, Junie, Father wrote that I am to have a pony of my very own; and he has a young spaniel named 'Bunch.' And probably I'll see the King."

"Oh! He's only a fat old man with goggly eyes. I shouldn't care much about seeing him," June scornfully responded, "but I'd like to have a spaniel named 'Bunch.'"

Millicent did not seem to care if her cousin had spoken so disrespectfully of the English King whose selfishness had brought such trouble on both England and America, and was finally to lose for England all power over the American Colonies.

"Junie, would you truly name a dog 'Bunch'? That is, I mean if you had a dog given to you for a present?" she asked eagerly, as if this was a most important question.

June laughed delightedly.

"I don't expect to have a dog or a present either," she replied; "if I ever do have a dog I'll write you, Millie, and you shall name it," and

this answer seemed to give Millie great satisfaction.

The day of her departure was now only two days distant; and while Mrs. Armstrong watched the weather signs anxiously, and Mrs. Lambert carefully packed Millicent's belongings, the two cousins wandered about the garden together, played with their dolls on the upper galleries, and were seldom separated.

More than once June wondered what secret it was that Millicent and Glenn had together, for Millie would run toward the well-pleased Glenn and evidently ask him, in a careful whisper, some question of importance, to which he would respond with smiling nods.

Grandma Armstrong also seemed to have a new interest in the stables at the rear of the gardens, as she made them daily visits. But June did not for a moment imagine that these things had anything to do with her. When she was not with Millie she was busy with her crayons and water-colors, and her mother declared she was making good progress.

The tiny picture of June was finished, and carefully fitted into the pearl locket on the day before Millicent's departure.

June looked at it admiringly. "Do I look

like that, Mother?" she asked, as she gazed at the dark curls, the smiling face with its friendly eyes and red cheeks.

"Yes, my dear. I am sure Millicent will think it exactly like you."

"Mother! Will you paint a larger one just like it for me to give Mrs. Tirrell?" she asked eagerly.

Mrs. Lambert thought this an excellent idea, and promised to begin on the picture in a few days.

The morning set for "The Fleetwing" to sail for London dawned clear and pleasant; and at an early hour Mrs. Armstrong's household were gathered on the front porch to bid Millicent good-bye. The little girl had a gift for each of the servants, and promising them that she was surely coming back to Charleston, Millie said her good-byes.

Mrs. Armstrong, June and her mother were to accompany her to the wharf and see her safely on board the ship. As they were ready to leave the house Millie suddenly darted back into the hall, and was back in a moment leading a golden brown spaniel who gazed about as if perfectly at home.

"Here's 'Bunch,' Junie. To remember me

by," said Millicent, laughing with delight at June's amazed expression.

"Oh, Millicent!" June exclaimed as she kneeled down to put both arms about the dog's silky head. "Wherever did you find him? And I'll be calling him 'Bunch,' and you will be calling your dog 'Bunch,' perhaps at the same minute."

"We must start, children," Mrs. Armstrong reminded them, as the two cousins smiled at each other over "Bunch's" golden head, and June tried to tell Millicent how delighted she was by her gift.

"Grandma and Glenn took care of him all last week," Millie explained.

Then another call reminded them that they must start for the wharf.

"Millie, shut your eyes!" commanded June, as they reached the lower step, and Millie smilingly obeyed.

In an instant June had slipped the golden chain holding the pearl locket around her neck.

"Millie, whisper The Vow to yourself that you will wear this locket until you come back to Charleston," June said, as Millie exclaimed that she would rather have the locket than anything. And, on discovering that it contained June's pic-

ture, she was quite ready to vow to wear it always.

But now June's mother insisted they must start, and with Glenn driving the old brown horse, harnessed to the shabby carriage, they rode down through familiar streets to the wharf, where Mrs. Wragg, Betty and Leila were awaiting them.

The ship in which they were to sail lay moored at some distance from the wharf; a rowboat, manned by English sailors, was waiting to take them on board. Good-byes were quickly said; the boat pulled away toward the ship with Millie waving her good-byes.

June stood watching until the ship's sails caught the morning breeze and moved down the harbor. She could see the distant line of Sullivan's Island, that always recalled the story her mother had told her of General Moultrie's brave defence of Charleston when, in June, 1776, a British fleet anchored off Sullivan's Island and attacked the fort, which General Moultrie and his small garrison defended with such vigor that the English ships drew off, and left the victory with the Americans.

CHAPTER XIII

A BOOK FOR MILLICENT

"BUNCH" proved the best of companions; he was always ready for a scamper through the gardens; he would sit quietly beside his young mistress on the upper gallery as June endeavored to draw a picture of the big magnolia tree, of the iron gates, or of "Bunch" himself; and even Grandma Armstrong declared that no dog could have better manners than the silken-coated spaniel.

"And indeed, since I helped to train him, I may take some credit for his good behavior," she would say smilingly.

June was now intent on sketching all the familiar places where she and Millicent had played together. She meant to make a book of these pictures and send it to her cousin.

"There'll be ships going often when the English begin to send their soldiers home," she said one morning a few weeks after Millie's departure, and her mother smilingly agreed; for at

this time, in September, 1781, the British forces in South Carolina were nearly ready to own themselves defeated.

General Greene's army, supported by the forces of Marion and Sumter, had marched against the English, under Colonel Stewart, at Eutaw, and defeated him. In this battle Colonel William Washington, a cousin of General George Washington, was wounded and taken prisoner. This battle seemed to greatly alarm the British in Charleston. They realized that the Americans were steadily moving toward that city. Glenn brought home news that a number of negroes were at work felling trees across the road on Charleston Neck.

The battle of Eutaw Springs, as it is known in history, was one of the fiercest of the War of the Revolution. Americans and British soldiers alike displayed a resolute valor. But the overpowering success of the Americans may be said to have ended the Revolutionary War in South Carolina.

Although the British delayed at various places they retreated steadily toward Charleston, and henceforth the power of King George the Third was not acknowledged beyond Charleston Neck. So it is small wonder that June was confident

that there would soon be many ships ready to sail for England.

Late in October, 1781, news reached Charleston that the Earl of Cornwallis had surrendered to the victorious American forces at Yorktown, Virginia. And, although Charleston was still under British rule, this surrender was in effect the end of the war, and England's hold on the American Colonies was forever gone.

From one end of the country to the other Americans celebrated this great victory, and the year of 1781 closed in triumph for the Americans and in the hope that peace would soon be established.

General Nathaniel Greene had now encamped his army on the west side of Ashley River, some sixteen miles from Charleston, and early in 1782 there were daily rumors that the British would soon leave Charleston; but the winter passed uneventfully and they were still in control of the city, although the Americans were now in possession of the whole state except Charleston and about six miles beyond its limits.

In all this time June had not heard a word from Mrs. Tirrell or from Kirke or Mundy. She often wondered about the little grey horse, and if she would ever see him again; and more

than once she had asked her mother if the time would ever come when she could make that long promised visit to the distant plantation.

"Kirke or Mundy would have to go with me for I could never find it," she said; and her mother agreed that, even if it were possible for June to attempt to reach Mrs. Tirrell's home in safety, either Kirke or Mundy would have to be her guide.

Her book of pictures for Millicent was now ready to be bound; and, as June wanted to do every bit of the work herself, Mrs. Lambert promised to show her how to bind the collection of drawings and water-color sketches. These were all on squares of firm white paper of an equal size, and one summer morning June secured two wide pieces of a pasteboard box that would serve as the foundation for covers.

Mrs. Armstrong gave her a breadth of an old silk skirt which June meant to use. By pasting the silk carefully over the cardboard she would secure a really beautiful cover for the book.

Glenn set a low wide table in June's favorite corner of the upper balcony, and the little girl spread out her materials. She held up the breadth of silk, and gazed at it admiringly. It

was a deep blue with a changeable silvery color as she turned it back and forth.

"I reckon Millie will never see a book with finer covers," she thought happily, as Cindy brought her the basin of steaming flour paste with which the silk was to be fastened to the cardboard squares.

June had already carefully pierced round holes through cardboard and pictures. When the silk should be smoothly and thoroughly dried over the cardboard she would pass blue ribbons through these holes and so secure them. As the covers were larger than her sketches the pictures would be well protected, and ribbons were to be attached to the outer edges by which the book could be held together.

Her mother had told her that the silk must be carefully cut, and the paste smoothly applied, and then June was left to her work. "Bunch" was curled up beside her chair, and as the little girl fitted the silk over the squares of pasteboard she sang softly to herself:

"'Let us go to the woods,' said Richard to Robin,"

and her thoughts fled back to the day she had rode away from the Tirrell plantation on the

little grey horse, and she recalled all that had so quickly followed.

"When Millie gets this book it will be a whole year that she has been in England," thought June, as she turned to glance at "Bunch" who, with a little growl, had suddenly jumped to his feet, and, with his head tilted to one side, was listening intently.

"It's just a bird fluttering about in the vines, Bunchie," said June, smiling at the dog's intentness, but turning her glance in the direction to which his head was pointed, and noticing the movement among the thick growth of wisteria that overhung the end of the balcony. "Just a bird, Bunchie," she repeated, but her hand clutched at his collar and held him fast, as she heard a low voice whisper:

"'Tis Kirke, again, little maid. I've been hiding here this past hour."

Instantly June was on her feet, and, with her hand still on "Bunch's" collar she ran to the corner where Kirke was concealed behind the mass of vines.

"Friends, Bunchie, friends," she repeated over and over, until the spaniel ceased his questioning growl and permitted Kirke to smooth his head.

Surprised and half frightened as she was at

this unexpected appearance of her old friend June was, nevertheless, delighted to see him; and Kirke responded quickly to her eager questions about Mrs. Tirrell.

"I've but a moment, little maid; but I promised Mrs. Tirrell to see you if possible and bring her news of you. She bade me say she hoped you would not forget your promise to visit her as soon as General Leslie takes these British from Charleston."

"Indeed I will. Will they soon go, Kirke?" she responded.

"Why, 'tis said that only last week, on May 20th, that General Leslie himself proposed an end to all hostilities between his men and the Americans to General Greene; but our general has to wait for instructions from the American Congress. Your little grey horse is safe and well, and Bob takes good care of him."

"Oh! Is 'Leo' at the plantation? That's the best of all good news," June eagerly declared.

Before she could say another word Kirke disappeared; and June, hearing approaching steps along the gallery, turned to find her grandmother coming toward her.

"Is the book nearly ready, Junie?" she asked bending over the table to look admiringly at

June's work; "you must finish it to-day, and have your letter to Millicent ready to go with it. Colonel Balfour sails to-morrow, and he has kindly promised to take any package I may wish to send."

June gave a little sigh of relief. It was evident that her grandmother had not heard Kirke's voice, and that she had no suspicion that anyone had been hiding behind the mass of vines that screened one corner of the gallery.

June was rather silent and thoughtful for the remainder of that day. Although she knew that there were good reasons to hope that peace would soon be established between Britain and America, she also realized that General Leslie would show little mercy to any American scout discovered in Charleston; and knowing that Kirke had risked great danger in order to bring her news of Mrs. Tirrell and "Leo," June feared lest he might not have escaped in safety.

But when she told her mother of his visit Mrs. Lambert was confident that Kirke had cleverly found his way back to General Greene's camp.

"We shall soon see the last of British soldiers, my dear. And even your grandmother will be glad of it, although she may never tell us so. It will surely be a happy day for us all

when we see them leave this city." And Mrs. Lambert and June began to make plans for Mrs. Tirrell to come to Charleston, if that could possibly be accomplished, to see the British leave the city that for over two years had been in their control.

"If Kirke had only waited I would have asked him to bid her come. Oh, Mother! I wish I might go and visit her and bring her home," said June.

Mrs. Lambert was thoughtful for a few moments, then she said:

"Maybe that will be possible, Junie. I am sure if you send a letter to Kirke in care of General Greene that it will reach him. You can ask him if he could take you to the Tirrell plantation. If he can do this I will let you go, and Roselinda with you."

June was eager now to at once write the letter, and to know how soon she could hope for a reply, and for a moment forgot that her letter to Millicent was not finished.

It was decided that Mrs. Lambert should write the letter to Kirke, and find a way to forward it as soon as possible.

June began to hope that very soon her mother would receive word that it would be possible for

the scout to guide her and the faithful Roselinda on the trip to the Tirrell plantation; but it was September before any answer was received, and then it was Kirke himself who came boldly to the Armstrong house.

Glenn answered the loud knock at the front door, to find a man, apparently a British soldier, asking for Mrs. Lambert, and June's mother came to the porch to speak to him with June beside her.

For a moment June stared at the red coat and soldier's cap as if she could not believe they were real. Kirke's smile, however, as he pulled off the cap reassured her.

" No, little maid, I'm not a 'turn-coat,' but this coat and cap were loaned me by a good friend of mine," he said, and then declared that he had come to say that if June and Roselinda could be ready to start that night he could take them up Ashley River to the Tirrell plantation.

" 'Tis the getting out of Charleston that is the only trouble; although the British have agreed to leave the city they are in no hurry. General Anthony Wayne will soon join General Greene in urging them to start for home; but until then 'tis safer to wear a red coat on such errands as mine," Kirke explained.

Then telling them that his boat would be at one of the smaller wharfs just after sunset; and promising Mrs. Lambert that her little daughter's journey would be much easier and safer than that of the previous year, Kirke took his departure, and June at once began to make ready for her journey.

As the little girl recalled that Kirke had said that the red coat and cap of a British soldier belonged to a "good friend," she wondered what that could possibly mean. How could it be that an American scout could be friends with a soldier of King George the Third?

But this question was soon to be answered, greatly to June's amazement.

CHAPTER XIV

"A RED-COAT"

JUNE, wearing a dress of green and white checked gingham, with a small round hat of white straw, and carrying a brown wool cape, clasped Roselinda's hand as they turned away from the big porch where she had just said good-bye to her mother and grandmother, and to the surprised "Bunch."

Roselinda carried a large basket in which the picture for Mrs. Tirrell was carefully packed, together with other gifts, as well as necessary clothing for June.

Dusk was just creeping over the city, and, after a day of extreme heat, the cool air of evening was bringing many people to the porches of the big houses along Broad Street. English officers in their red coats sauntered along toward the sea front, and there was the sound of gay music from open windows.

None of the passers-by took any notice of so usual a sight as a negro girl carrying a big basket and leading her young mistress along the street; but every time they passed a British soldier

June's clasp tightened on Roselinda's hand; and not until they had turned into a narrow lane leading away from the town did the little girl feel really sure that someone would not stop and question her.

But, as Kirke had told Mrs. Lambert, there was now but little danger in the journey up the Ashley River once they were clear from the Charleston shore. Kirke trusted to his red coat and cap to ensure their safety until this was accomplished, and June and Roselinda had not gone far along the lane before he came hurrying to meet them.

"I expected to hear a screech-owl before I saw you," said June, as Kirke bade them leave the lane for a path that turned sharply toward the shore.

"That call is used only when we are in danger, or need help," he replied. "You answered it more than once, little maid. You surely saved Mundy and me from capture," he continued soberly, as he led the way through the long grass and around groups of thickly growing palmetto trees to where a tumbled-down wharf ran out from the beach.

Before leaving the shadow of the trees Kirke came to a sudden halt.

"Wait here a minute," he whispered, and strode off through the dusk.

"Oh! There's somebody stopping him!" June exclaimed, as a dark figure rose from the ground directly in front of Kirke.

June feared this meeting must mean that someone had discovered that Kirke was an American scout. She peered through the shadows wondering what she could do to help him if her fears were true, but Kirke's voice bidding them to come on made her sure that this newcomer must be a friend; and, with Roselinda close behind her, she ran forward.

"Boat all ready and waiting, and breeze enough to give us a good start up the river," she heard the stranger say as they went along the decaying planks of the old wharf.

June had expected to find the old flat-bottomed boat in which she had made the former journey, and she gave an exclamation of surprise as she discovered a good-sized sloop, its sail already hoisted, at the end of the wharf. Kirke helped her on board, and, bidding her sit beside Roselinda on the stern seat, busied himself with casting the boat clear from the wharf.

The stranger had taken his place at the tiller, and in a few moments they were moving out some

distance from land. Watching Kirke June saw him pull off the red coat and soldier's cap and fling them into the small cabin.

"I hope I don't have to wear those again," he declared, and June wondered why the stranger, beside whom she was sitting, should sigh so deeply, or why he should whisper to himself: "'Tis a uniform many brave men have been proud to wear."

If Kirke heard these words he made no response. He told June that she and Roselinda could take a look at the tiny cabin if they wished, and they both peered into the open door.

"Why, 'tis like a little room, Roselinda! Look, it has a table and beds against the wall," exclaimed June, as the negro girl carried the basket in and set it carefully in one corner; "but I'd rather stay outside," she decided, making her way back to the seat beside the stranger.

Kirke seemed in the best of spirits; he sang snatches of song, and began to tell the man at the tiller of his first meeting with June when he had discovered the queer little figure, wearing a black dress, under the big tree by the roadside.

"'Twas a lucky meeting for Mundy and me," he continued, and went on to describe how June had discovered the raiders near the Tirrell plan-

tation, and of how cleverly she had enabled Marion's men to capture the king's soldiers. Then he told of the day when he and Mundy had been made prisoners and of June coming to their rescue.

"What say you to courage like that in a little maid?" he concluded.

But before the stranger could make any response, Roselinda, staring at her young mistress as if to make sure that the girl beside her was really June, exclaimed:

"Am dis de truf, Missie June, or am it jes' a story?"

"I reckon it's true, Roselinda. Hush, it's all over now," June whispered, as the negro girl began to exclaim over the dangers her young mistress had encountered during that mysterious visit of a year ago.

"I knew that the men of America were ready to risk life and fortune to secure their liberties, that women would see their homes destroyed for so great a cause, and now you tell me, Kirke, that this little maid helped to capture a party of English soldiers, and set two prisoners free?" said the stranger, as if he, too, like Roselinda, could hardly credit such a tale.

"'Tis true enough. You see, Stearns, 'twas

small use for your King and Parliament to tax American Colonies so unjustly; to send armies here to crush us into compliance. You have come to think we are in the right, if you are an English soldier," said Kirke.

June leaned forward at these words, and whispered: "An English soldier!" What could it mean, she wondered a little fearfully, that an English soldier should be on such good terms with an American scout?

The dusk of the September night grew more deep as the favoring breeze sent the boat swiftly along the quiet river. The soft ripple of water against the bow of the sloop made a pleasant murmur; and June, watching the dark line of the shore, with her head resting against Roselinda's comfortable shoulder, almost forgot this puzzling question as she thought of all the delight of again seeing Mrs. Tirrell, and remembered thankfully that Tarleton's raiders were no longer a menace to the peaceful plantations that stretched along the Ashley River.

"We must go back to Charleston in time to see the British leave the city. Mother said that day must be near at hand," thought June, as she drifted into sleep.

But this hopeful possibility was not as near at

hand as the loyal Americans of South Carolina hoped. For although in the summer of 1782 the British had announced their intention of leaving Charleston, the evacuation of the city was not to take place until the 14th of December, 1782, and long before that time June would be safely back in her grandmother's home.

She had slept for hours before she was awakened by the rattle of the sail as it was hauled down, the bump of the boat against a wharf, and Roselinda's voice declaring:

"We's come ter land, Missie June. I reckon we be goin' ashore."

It was still dark, and the deep shadow of the trees about the Tirrell house made June sure that the night had not passed. But along the eastern horizon there was a faint glow that showed dawn was not far distant, and there was the murmur of bird-notes and soft musical calls from the hedges of dogwood bushes, and from near-by trees as Kirke lifted June from the boat and led her up the dim path, with Roselinda stumbling along behind them; but the stranger remained on the boat.

As June caught the first glimpse of the dim outlines of the familiar house she gave a cry of delight, and would have run forward had not

Kirke kept a firm clasp on her hand, and the mournful note of the "shriek-owl" sounded through the quiet night.

"Just to wake them up," said Kirke, as he repeated the call; and in a moment a light flashed from a window, and, with a little laugh of satisfaction, Kirke hurried June on toward the house and she saw the wide door swing open. In the faint light she could see a shadowy figure that she was sure was Mrs. Tirrell, and she darted forward.

"I have come back, just as I promised, Mrs. Tirrell! And we needn't be afraid of the British. They're going to leave Charleston!" she exclaimed, and in a moment Mrs. Tirrell's arms were about her, and she heard the delighted exclamations of Marty and Bob as they recognized their young visitor of the previous year.

The day passed only too quickly, and at sunset they all walked to the creek to bid Kirke goodbye, and to watch him start on his sail down the river to where General Greene's army were encamped. He carried a letter from June to her father, and this time there was no need of secrecy. The successes of the American forces had confined the British to the vicinity of Charleston,

and they would soon be obliged to leave even that last stronghold.

Although South Carolina had been laid waste by conflict, houses destroyed and plantations ruined, peace was at hand, and Americans could go and come as they pleased; and June knew that henceforth Kirke could journey in safety.

As they turned back to the house, with Roselinda keeping close beside her young mistress, Mrs. Tirrell said: "Did you not tell me, June, that the man in the Provost bade you give his message to General William Moultrie?"

"Yes, but I couldn't! And Millicent couldn't either, though she did her best. But the English guard took it away from her," said June, her smile vanishing as she recalled that gaunt figure that had thrust the brown paper into her hand, and remembered that, after all, she had not been able to help him.

"Well, my dear, General Moultrie is at Winyou, not far from here. He is a free man once more, and I have news that he means to visit General Greene's camp and will be on his way to-morrow."

"Oh, Mrs. Tirrell! I do wish he would come this way," said June, thinking how much she

would like to tell the great soldier about the man in the Provost.

"That is what I want to talk to you about. The road he will take runs about five miles from here, and he will be apt to start early, in the cool of the morning. What do you say to our riding to meet him and asking him to honor my poor house for a few hours of rest?"

"Can we? Truly? Oh! Roselinda, you must be sure to wake me in good season," she exclaimed, fairly dancing along the path.

"We can and we will," declared Mrs. Tirrell, "and we would best go early to bed so we may be up and about at an early hour to-morrow. You shall ride 'Leo,' and I'll ride 'Bobbin.'"

CHAPTER XV

GENERAL MOULTRIE'S VISIT

JUNE was awakened the next morning by Roselinda's voice:

"Missus Tirrell say time ter get up," she announced sleepily. "But 'tain't de time Charleston folks be stirrin'. 'Tain't daybreak."

"Oh, it is, Roselinda!" exclaimed June, who was out of bed in a second, and who dressed as rapidly as possible, thinking that this September day could not begin early enough.

She put on the same dress and hat that she had worn on the previous day, and ran through the narrow hall to the dining-room, where Mrs. Tirrell in a dress of faded brown cotton and with a sunbonnet of the same material lying on one end of the table, which she would put on before they started, was waiting.

"We have a nice melon for breakfast, Junie," she said, motioning toward a seat beside her, "and Bob has lowered two more into the well so they will be fresh and cool for General Moultrie."

"Into the well?" June repeated questioningly.

"Why, yes! When you lived on your father's plantation didn't you lower your melons in nets into the well so they would be chilled?" asked Mrs. Tirrell.

But June could not remember this; but she enjoyed the melon, followed by the usual hot corn cake and honey. She watched Mrs. Tirrell put on the cotton sunbonnet as they turned toward the yard where the two horses stood saddled and ready for them to mount.

Philip Stearns was there to help them into their saddles, and June wondered if he knew that the guest they hoped to bring home with them was one of the bravest of American officers. But she was too eager to be off to give this more than a fleeting thought, and in a few moments they were beyond the trees and underbrush that encircled the old house, and riding along a rough lane.

"'Tis like the morning we started to ride to Charleston!" declared June, smiling at her companion as the horses trotted briskly along.

"Only now we have nothing to fear," Mrs. Tirrell reminded her. "There are no King's men lurking near every plantation ready to de-

stroy it, and to take its owners captives. South Carolina will soon see the last of its invaders."

The horses fairly danced along in the fresh morning air. There was the song of birds, the fragrance of ripening berries, and of autumn near at hand. Very soon Mrs. Tirrell drew rein under a wide-spreading live oak.

"We can see from here where the main road crosses this, the road by which General Moultrie will travel. His way will bring him past this tree, and I hope he will agree to honor my house by a visit," she said.

June slid from her saddle, and, keeping a fast hold of her bridle rein, smoothed "Leo's" grey mane, as she looked earnestly along the road, eager for the first sight of the hoped-for visitor.

"Look! I can see a little cloud of dust, and two men on horseback. They are riding very fast!" she exclaimed. "Will we go to meet them, or wait here? Whom do you suppose it is with General Moultrie?"

But Mrs. Tirrell did not need to answer June's questions. Already they could hear the beat of the horses' hoofs, and in a moment June could see that one of the riders was a colored servant.

The pace of the approaching riders slowed as

they discovered the woman and girl by the roadside; and as they came nearer June dropped "Leo's" bridle-rein and ran to meet them exclaiming: "General Moultrie, I'm June Lambert. I've come to meet you! And this is Mrs. Tirrell." Then her face flushed deeply as she remembered all her Grandmother Armstrong's instructions as to the proper manner in which a young lady should greet a person of distinction, and, just touching her skirt with her finger-tips, June curtseyed low, and looked up to see the smiling soldier swing himself from the saddle, and, with his worn and faded hat in one hand, make her as formal a salutation "as if I were Grandmother Armstrong herself!" thought the smiling little girl, as General Moultrie greeted Mrs. Tirrell and, in response to her urgent invitation, declared there was nothing he would like better than to rest at the Tirrell plantation.

"Fortune," General Moultrie's black servant, who had followed his master's fortunes all through the war, helped June to her place in the saddle, and they rode off toward the plantation.

As they trotted along the general spoke of a dreary journey he had recently made through the central part of South Carolina. He told of ruined plantations, of forests destroyed, and of

long stretches of country devastated by war where not even a wild-bird or squirrel could be found. On visiting his own plantation he had found all his livestock had been driven away, and every bit of furniture taken from his house by the British.

But not one of his two hundred slaves had left the place. The general's voice trembled with emotion as he described how they had crowded forward to welcome him.

June listened to every word. She wondered how many of the valorous defenders of American independence would find their homes as General Moultrie had found his—"a desolate place."

As Mrs. Tirrell led the way along the hidden paths to the weather-worn house General Moultrie praised the skill and caution that had planned this protection for her home.

"Nevertheless, it would have been discovered and, doubtless, destroyed by a party of Tarleton's raiders had it not been for this little maid," Mrs. Tirrell responded, with a friendly smile toward June, and she quickly told the story of June's clever thought of freeing the raiders' horses, and mounting one and leading the raiders a chase until there was small danger of their

finding the way back. "Both these horses belonged to Tarleton's men," she concluded.

"But 'twas Kirke and Mundy who captured them," insisted June, as the general turned toward her with an approving smile.

"And it was June who set Kirke and Mundy free a few weeks later," continued Mrs. Tirrell, telling of their ride to Charleston, and how the warning note of the screech-owl had led them to the camp where the two scouts were held prisoners.

Before she had finished this story of the little girl's courage they made the last turn in the twisting path, and were in sight of the house.

Philip Stearns and Bob came running to meet them, but it was General Moultrie himself who helped June dismount, and who held her hand fast in his own as they entered the house.

"Your father will be proud indeed to hear this account of your heroism while American men were struggling for their liberties. Why, I should be proud to have matched your courage, little maid. Tell me of something I can do for you to show that I shall ever remember that a little maid of South Carolina was alert and ready to do her part in defeating the invaders," he said, looking at June with so much kindness that

the little girl wondered how anyone could say that his soldiers feared his displeasure more than the guns of the enemy.

"If you please, sir," she ventured, "would you let me draw a picture of you?"

General Moultrie gazed at her in astonishment, but he replied instantly:

"Nothing could give me greater pleasure. You shall draw me as I sit at breakfast, for which I have the best of appetites."

And so, as the great general took his seat at the table, June ran for her box of crayons and the paper she had so carefully packed in the big basket. And when he had finished the cool melon and excellent breakfast that the excited Marty had ready for him, General Moultrie turned smilingly toward the little girl and declared himself quite at her service.

"I wrote you a letter once, General Moultrie, but I reckon you never received it. 'Twas about a prisoner in the Provost who gave me a message for you," said June, busy with her crayons.

General Moultrie looked at her sharply, but, for a moment, made no response.

"It was last summer," continued June, "just before you left South Carolina," and she went on to tell the story of the cake she had carried to

the Provost: of her fear that she, too, and perhaps her mother, would be made a prisoner.

"So I ran away, and Kirke and Mundy found me and brought me here," she concluded, "but I reckon I didn't help the Provost prisoner after all."

"So you were the little maid who brought that letter to Colonel Balfour? I did receive it, and I was able to do what the prisoner wished. He and a number of others were released before I left Charleston," responded General Moultrie. "You see, little maid, that here is another service of kindness and loyalty that you have rendered."

"'Twas Millicent, my Tory cousin, who has gone to England to live, who carried the letter. Grandma made me stay in Mother's room that day," June hastened to explain.

The sketch was quickly finished, and approved by General Moultrie and Mrs. Tirrell; and, a little later, the general bade them good-bye, as he hoped to meet other friends on his way who would accompany him to General Greene's camp on the Ashley River, a few miles from Charleston.

As he bade June good-bye he said:

"The day is near at hand when the English troops now in Charleston will sail away. I shall

be there on that day of deliverance, and you must be there, too, little maid. I shall look for you, for you have tried to do your part to help in these dangerous days when we were struggling for our liberties, and you shall share in our triumphs."

June could make no response to these grave words; but she smiled and curtseyed as he rode away, thinking that this was surely a day she would always love to recall, and that nothing more wonderful than the praise of General William Moultrie could ever befall her.

"But I must surely be in Charleston to see the British march out," she resolved.

Every day she rode "Leo" about the familiar lanes of the plantation, and October 1st, the day set for her return to Charleston, came only too quickly. Again she was to ride "Leo," while "Bobbin," harnessed to a light wagon, would carry Mrs. Tirrell and Roselinda.

But this time they could ride along well-traveled roads, and by starting early in the morning they could hope to reach Charleston that night.

"You will stay all night anyway and I can show you the hidden staircase, and you will see 'Bunch,'" said June as they talked over their

plans for the journey, and Mrs. Tirrell agreed that she could do this. "Perhaps the English will be leaving that very day," said June hopefully.

"'Tis to be hoped the American officers will have their new uniforms for that occasion. Did you hear General Moultrie tell me that General George Washington has himself directed that henceforth the uniform of a Brigadier-General of the American Army is to be a blue coat with buff facings and linings, yellow buttons, white or buff breeches, two epaulets with one star on each, and a white feather in his hat," said Mrs. Tirrell, smiling at June's eager interest.

"Will General Moultrie wear that uniform? Oh! If he does I will make another picture of him," declared June.

"He is a Major-General, but his uniform will be much the same, only there will be two stars on each of his epaulets, and a black and white feather in his hat," replied Mrs. Tirrell, and added that all officers were directed to wear "side arms," as a sword was called.

"General Washington thinks it of great importance, both for the sake of appearance, and that different military ranks may be distinguished from each other, especially at this time,

to establish distinctive uniforms," said Mrs. Tirrell; and June instantly began to imagine the fine appearance of the triumphant Americans when they should once more march into Charleston.

On the day following this conversation they set forth on their ride to Charleston. The morning was bright and clear, a pleasant breeze stirred the tree-tops, as the little household gathered in the yard to bid them a cheerful good-bye. Philip Stearns was well pleased to be trusted to take charge of the plantation for the two days that its mistress would be away; and Roselinda, all smiles and chuckles, thought this was the very best part of the visit.

"Leo" could hardly stand still long enough for June to mount, and was off at a canter before Mrs. Tirrell had taken her seat in the wagon. But June was now well used to controlling the little grey horse, and had no fear of what he might do. In a few moments he was ready to trot quietly back; and now riding near the wagon, June felt that she was really on her way home.

Remembering her first visit, when she had watched Kirke and Mundy ride away singing: "'Let us go to the woods,' says Richard to

Robin," she began the old song that men had sung in England many years ago. Mrs. Tirrell joined in, and the pleasant music echoed through the peaceful lanes and woodlands.

At the end of an hour's ride Mrs. Tirrell suggested that June should take her place in the wagon, and that she should ride "Leo," and drawing rein beside a small brook near the highway, June dismounted, and took her seat beside Roselinda.

They passed more than one desolate plantation, where only broken chimneys remained to mark where King's men had found and destroyed a prosperous home. Nor did they encounter any travelers along the way.

At noonday Mrs. Tirrell guided "Leo" into a wayside lane, and "Bobbin" sedately followed.

"We will rest here an hour or two," said Mrs. Tirrell, taking off "Leo's" saddle, while June and Roselinda unharnessed "Bobbin." "There's sure to be a brook not far away," declared Mrs. Tirrell. "I'll go look for it and call when I discover it, and you can lead the horses for a drink while Roselinda unpacks our lunch."

"Give the 'screech-owl' call, twice. Will

you, Mrs. Tirrell?" asked June; "'twill make it seem like our first journey."

Mrs. Tirrell smilingly agreed, and started down a little wooded slope in the direction where she expected to find a stream.

"I'se right glad to get out ob dis cart," said Roselinda, as she set down the basket of luncheon in the shade of a catalpa tree. "Dis am de bes' part ob visitin'; ter be on de way home."

June paid little attention to the negro girl's chatter; she was listening intently for the call, holding the bridle-reins of both "Bobbin" and "Leo," and ready to start the moment she heard it.

And suddenly it came: so shrill and piercing that both the horses gave a sudden jump; but June had a firm grasp on the reins, and held them fast as she turned in the direction of the call.

"Mrs. Tirrell forgot to call twice," she thought, as she ran along the grassy slope, and at that moment the call came again. But this time it was not from the direction she had expected, but came from the woodland on the left.

June instantly turned the horses in that direction, smiling to herself at the shrillness of the "shriek-owl's" cry.

"I reckon Kirke himself couldn't make it sound so loud," she thought admiringly.

June could never afterward clearly describe what happened as she reached the edge of the woodland. She heard a strange noise from the upper branches of a dead tree; a long warning note, and saw a queer grey figure that seemed all claws and shining eyes darting down upon her.

With a snort of terror both horses reared beside her, broke loose from her grasp, and rushed off, while June, with a shriek that rivaled that of any shriek-owl, ran wildly forward to escape this danger that seemed about to destroy her.

CHAPTER XVI

AN ADVENTUROUS RIDE

JUNE did not turn to look behind her as she fled from the fluttering, shrieking creature. If she had she would have discovered that her wish to see a shriek-owl had been granted; and that the bird had again perched itself on a branch of a tree, where, preening its feathers, and regaining its own courage, it was as harmless as possible.

But she ran on, not seeing or caring in what direction her flight was leading her, until catching her foot in a mass of tangled vines she fell flat on her face.

For a moment June dared not move. Every second she expected to hear again that terrifying shriek. When she did venture to lift her head she feared lest a hovering mass of grey feathers, claws, and shining eyes would pounce upon her. Very slowly she drew herself up, kneeling on the vines, and looked about. She found herself surrounded by tall trees from which drooped festoons of grey moss. It was very quiet; she listened intently but could not hear a sound.

Freeing her feet from the clutch of the vines she moved close to one of the tall trees, wondering how far she might be from Roselinda and Mrs. Tirrell; and, with an exclamation of fear, remembered that the two horses had broke loose from her grasp on their bridle-reins and raced off.

"Oh! I ought to have held on tight. I ought not to have been afraid," she whispered; "the horses may run miles. Whatever will Mrs. Tirrell and Roselinda do!" And, resolved to do her best to find "Leo" and "Bobbin," June turned in the direction in which she believed she had come, and ran along between the moss-hung trees.

Often she had to circle around thick growths of small cedar trees, or clusters of laurel bushes. But, believing that very soon she would come to the little clearing where she had left Roselinda and the wagon, she did not realize that she had nothing by which to guide her course, and that she was in an unknown country.

Once or twice she thought she would stop and give the well-known signal: the shriek-owl call. "But it might bring that dreadful creature again!" she told herself with a little shiver at such a fearful possibility.

Not until she was so tired that she could only walk very slowly did June come to a full stop.

"I reckon I'll rest," she decided, and sank down on a thick bed of moss between two scrubby cedar trees. Looking about her June quickly realized that she did not know what direction to take, and that she was in the depths of a thick woodland where there was no trace of a path.

It was a more dangerous position than the little girl could possibly comprehend. Although it was but little past noonday the moss-draped trees grew so close to one another that the October sunlight seemed dim and shadowy, and June had been fleeing further and further from the place where she had left Roselinda. While there were no dangerous wild animals to be feared in that locality, there was the very great danger that she might wander about and perish from exhaustion and hunger before she could be discovered.

When "Leo" and "Bobbin" had broken loose from June's grasp on their reins, and dashed madly away from the vicinity of the shriek-owl, they had, fortunately, run only a short distance before Roselinda was after them.

The negro girl had heard the commotion, and

had run in the direction from which the sounds came, and had seen the two horses come dashing wildly across the clearing. Without an instant's hesitation she ran toward them calling: "Whoa, Leo! Whoa, Bobbin," and succeeded in catching "Leo's" bridle-rein and bringing him to a standstill. "Bobbin," seeing his companion halt, followed "Leo's" example, and Roselinda led the two horses back to the wagon, fastened them securely, and then set out to find her young mistress.

But she had no idea of the direction June had taken, and her calls brought no response from the little girl, although Mrs. Tirrell came running up the slope to ask what was the trouble.

"De hosses broke away frum Missie, but I catched 'em. Dey's tied ter de wagon. An' now Missie June ain't ter be found," declared the anxious Roselinda.

"She can't be far away. I'll find her while you lead the horses to the brook. You can't miss it. 'Tis just behind those dogwood bushes," said Mrs. Tirrell, pointing in the direction from which she had come.

"Yas'm," said Roselinda, and started off with "Leo" and "Bobbin," warning them not to try "any ob yo' tricks ob r'arin' an' jumpin',

'cos' I ain' gwine ter leave go ob dese reins whatsumeber yo' does."

But the horses were now content to walk moderately along to the slow-moving stream that made its way through underbrush and across grassy fields. They drank thirstily, and then trotted back, with Roselinda running beside them, to eat the noonday portion of grain that had been provided for them.

Roselinda then looked about at the edge of the woodland, expecting at every moment to see Mrs. Tirrell and June coming toward her. She even ventured in among the tall trees, but a whirling mass of grey feathers with outstretched claws and shining eyes, that hooted and "whoo-whoed" as it flew across her path, sent the frightened negro girl running back to the wagon.

"Maybe dat was a bird an' maybe 'twasn't!" she announced. "Whatsumeber it be I'se gwine ter stay right in dis place."

And there Mrs. Tirrell found her, close to the wagon, when after an hour's search without discovering any trace of June, she came back hoping to find the little girl safe with Roselinda.

Neither of them thought of luncheon, although it was now many hours since their early breakfast.

"If June has ventured into the woods she may wander about and not know the way back. I mustn't stay here. I must find her before evening sets in," said Mrs. Tirrell.

"You'd bes' take a bite ob food 'long wid yo', Mistress. Missie June sure ter be hungry after all dis walkin'," suggested Roselinda, and Mrs. Tirrell agreed that this was a wise thought, and made a small package of the corn bread and cold chicken from the lunch basket. Putting this in the deep pocket of her skirt, and bidding Roselinda not to go out of sight of the horses and wagon, she started again to search for June.

But this time Mrs. Tirrell did not simply wander here and there calling June's name. She searched along the sandy soil for footprints, and discovered near a dead tree at the edge of the woods the very point where the horses had broken away from June; and, a little further on, the marks of the little girl's footprints.

"Something frightened June as well as the horses, and she ran straight ahead from this place," decided Mrs. Tirrell, as she moved forward among the tall trees, watching carefully for some trace that would show that the little girl had passed that way. She was about to turn to avoid a mass of tangled vines when she dis-

covered a fluttering shred of cloth clinging to the bramble. In a moment she had it in her hand.

" 'Tis surely a bit of June's green gingham dress," she exclaimed; " she must have stumbled over these vines," and Mrs. Tirrell now watched even more carefully for some other sign to show the direction June had taken.

" I must make sure that I can find my own way back," she thought; and, tearing her handkerchief into shreds, she tied a strip to a low branch of a cedar tree just beyond the place where June had fallen. And as she kept on her way Mrs. Tirrell left the little white signals fastened to bushes, or low-growing limbs of trees, to mark her path.

" They may help June to find me, if the child is wandering near by," she thought, calling June's name repeatedly, and stopping often to listen for a response.

But no answer came. The afternoon sun was drawing near to the western horizon, and the shadows grew deeper under the tall trees as Mrs. Tirrell realized that she must rest. Sitting down near a tiny brook that wandered through the woodland, she drew the packet of food from her pocket and ate a square of corn bread and a bit of chicken; that, with a drink of water from the

brook, made her supper, as she resolved to keep the remainder for June.

Then she sounded the familiar call of the shriek-owl. Over and over she repeated it, and June, resting on a mossy log farther on in the woodland, heard the faint echoing notes.

"That is not the horrid noise that creature made that flew from the tree," she told herself. "'Tis surely Mrs. Tirrell calling for me," and she called back.

"'Tis June!" Mrs. Tirrell exclaimed, starting to her feet, and moving in the direction of the sound.

And so, repeating each other's calls, they were steadily approaching each other, and June, crying out with delight at her first sight of her friend, came running to meet Mrs. Tirrell through the deepening shadows.

It took but a moment to tell the story of the cause of her flight into the woods. Then, welcoming the corn bread and chicken, June ate hungrily and declared herself ready to start back.

Mrs. Tirrell had taken careful notice of the way she had come, and before darkness fell Roselinda was loudly welcoming them back to the wagon.

June was too tired for them to continue their journey that night, and Roselinda and Mrs. Tirrell gathered a mass of the dry grass, broke off cedar boughs, and made beds beside the wagon. The horses were led to the brook for a drink, and then they were all ready for sleep.

Morning came only too quickly, and found them all eager to start on the last stretch of their journey. There was enough food for their breakfast, and they were on the highway before the sun was well up in the sky.

But there was one drawback to June's delight in this return journey. Mrs. Tirrell said that she could only go with them to within a mile or two of Charleston. Then Roselinda would have to walk the remainder of the way.

"I must keep my promise and be back at the plantation to-night," she said.

"Oh! And I'm to blame! Just because a bird flew from a tree I had to be frightened and get myself lost!" wailed June, sadly disappointed that she must miss the pleasure of showing Mrs. Tirrell the secret staircase, of making her acquainted with her mother, and of introducing the accomplished "Bunch."

"Of course you were frightened! Who wouldn't be?" Mrs. Tirrell had responded, "and

I promise to come for a real visit as soon as General Leslie takes his British soldiers out of Charleston."

"But I want you to be there to see them go," said June.

"Why, perhaps I will," Mrs. Tirrell rejoined hopefully; and encouraged by this promise June once more began to enjoy her ride along the pleasant road.

As they drew nearer to Charleston, however, they began to meet occasional travelers. A party of English soldiers rode past them, and Mrs. Tirrell decided that the time had come for her to turn back.

"Can't Roselinda sit behind me?" suggested June as they turned from the highway, and Roselinda left her comfortable seat beside Mrs. Tirrell.

"Of course she can; 'twill be much better for you both. And we can fasten your basket to the saddle," said Mrs. Tirrell.

"I reckon I'll jes' step into dis wagon so's to get myse'f onto dat horse," said Roselinda, and Mrs. Tirrell smilingly agreed that this was an excellent plan.

"Ride straight on, June," directed Mrs. Tirrell. "I do not think anyone will molest or ques-

tion you, and you will reach home within an hour."

Then, promising to come to Charleston as soon as possible, Mrs. Tirrell bade June and Roselinda good-bye, and watched "Leo" start off with his new burden.

"Don' yo' let dis horse run away, Missie June. Yo' jes' keep him ter a walk," pleaded Roselinda, who clutched at the saddle fearful of a tumble.

"Leo," with this double load, was well content to go at a slow pace, and as they rode along June recalled that this was the very road over which she had made her way wearing the trailing black gown, and the black lace bonnet and veil.

When "Leo" trotted toward the front entrance of Mrs. Armstrong's house "Bunch" came racing around the corner, and was the first to welcome June, as she slid down from the saddle and was nearly knocked over by the spaniel's leap toward her.

"I reckon nobody saw dose sojers dat 'scorted us home," Roselinda declared in a regretful tone, as she too dismounted, and called loudly: "Glenn, Glenn! We's home!"

CHAPTER XVII

THE BRITISH SAIL AWAY

MAJOR-GENERAL MOULTRIE had established himself in a house on Middleton Place, and June often saw him riding about the city; and more than once he drew rein to speak with his little friend, and to bid her to be ready for the great day when the English troops would march out of Charleston.

Mrs. Armstrong had welcomed June's father as if he had not helped to defeat the Tory cause. If she grieved over the defeat of King George the Third in America she no longer spoke of Americans as "rebels," and her family believed that the war had convinced her that the Americans had been obliged to defend their homes.

One Friday morning in December, 1782, June's father received word that the following day, Saturday, December 14, 1782, the British would evacuate Charleston. The enemy's fleet, nearly three hundred vessels, lay at anchor from Fort Johnson in a curved line, ready to depart.

General Anthony Wayne was to cross Ashley

River, and, as the British troops marched to Gadesen's Wharf to embark, the American troops would march into Charleston and take possession of the city.

Mrs. Lambert, with many cautions for Glenn, gave her consent for June to ride down Broad Street with Glenn to take care of her.

"Leo" came trotting up to the door, curving his shining neck as if as pleased as June herself, who, wearing the velvet cape and cap, mounted quickly, and with the delighted Glenn striding beside her, rode down the street.

Balconies, windows and doors were crowded with joyful and expectant citizens awaiting the return of the valiant American forces; and as "Leo" trotted along June waved her hand to friends, and thought to herself that this was a day of happiness for everyone.

"Dar dey come, Missie! De British am sure gone now! Hear de fife an' de drum! Dar's Gen'r'l Moultrie, Missie June. See de fine blue coats dey's wearin'," and the excited Glenn had all he could do not to shout his delight at the fine sight of the advancing troops.

It was indeed a proud day for General Nathaniel Greene, for General Anthony Wayne, and for the loyal South Carolinian, General Wil-

liam Moultrie, as they led their troops back in triumph. Beside General Greene rode Governor John Mathews, and a cavalry troop of one hundred and eighty men brought up the rear.

They halted in Broad Street, only a short distance from where "Leo," with Glenn's hand on his bridle-rein, was evidently eager to join the cavalry.

"There's Kirke! There's Mundy!" exclaimed June, recognizing her friends as the cavalry were dismounting, talking to welcoming friends, and in a moment the two scouts, smiling at the sight of the little girl, were close beside "Leo," and June was telling them of her delight in seeing them ride triumphantly into Charleston.

But an instant later she quite forgot them as she saw General Moultrie riding toward her. With a word to Kirke and Mundy, and bidding Glenn to follow June, General Moultrie said:

"This day rewards us for all the dangers and troubles of the war. Now, Miss June, ride with me a little way down the street that General Greene and Governor Mathews may see the little grey horse you ride, and hear what a loyal little maid can do to help her friends when they are in danger."

A little puzzled by General Moultrie's words, June obediently turned "Leo" and rode proudly along the crowded street beside the valiant general who had so unfalteringly proved his loyalty to America.

General Greene and Governor Mathews saluted the little girl as General Moultrie said: "Gentlemen, here is the little maid, Miss June Valentine Lambert, of whom I told you. She is riding the horse she captured from Tarleton's raiders, and she rescued two American scouts who had been captured."

June did not know what to say as the general who had led his soldiers through many a battle, who had faced every danger and hardship, and had at last triumphed over the invading foes, smiled upon her and said:

"Why, 'tis only what we should expect of a little maid of South Carolina when her father was a soldier in my army, and her mother showing an equal heroism in aiding Marion's men. Your reward, young lady, will be in always remembering that you helped America achieve her independence."

"And this pretty grey horse will remind you of your courage," added Governor Mathews.

June smiled and wished she could think of

something to say to these grave-faced men who looked upon her so approvingly. But she was too greatly surprised to be at ease, and could only manage to murmur that she was glad that General Greene was in Charleston. Then people began to crowd upon the little group, congratulating the soldiers, and saying: "God bless you, gentlemen! You are welcome home, gentlemen," and soldiers as well as citizens showed their delight in this day of their deliverance.

Glenn, smiling and happy to see his young mistress honored and noticed by the men who would ever be remembered in the history of American valor, was close beside "Leo." But it was General Moultrie himself who guided the little girl through the crowd, and rode beside her to the tall iron gates of her grandmother's house. There, with a pleasant word of approval, he bade her good-bye, and June, flushed and happy, sent "Leo" into a smart trot up the driveway.

"Mother! Mother!" she called, as she ran up the steps, "General Moultrie himself ——" but she stopped suddenly as she discovered her mother had a guest: a lady, dressed in a gown of violet colored silk, who, at the sound of June's voice, turned quickly, exclaiming:

"You see, Junie, I arrived in time to watch the British leave Charleston."

"Oh! This is the happiest day!" declared June as she ran to welcome Mrs. Tirrell, who, like all loyal South Carolinians who could by any means reach the city on December 14, 1782, had journeyed to Charleston to watch the British ships leave the harbor.

"Yo' gran'ma says yo' is ter step up to her room, Missie June," said Glenn; and, wondering what her grandmother wanted of her, June ran up the wide stairway and tapped at the half-open door.

A fire of glowing chestnut logs warmed and brightened the big chamber; and Mrs. Armstrong, seated beside her work table, smiled a welcome to her little granddaughter.

"Take off your cape and cap, June, and sit down. I want to talk with you," she said.

"Bunch" stood close beside his little mistress, and, as June seated herself in a low chair near her grandmother, he curled up at her feet as if assured that this pleasant fire and soft rug had been specially arranged for his comfort.

"I had the honor of a visit from General Moultrie this morning," said Mrs. Armstrong, with a little nod toward June; "he came to in-

form me that my little granddaughter is a heroine. That she saved the Tirrell plantation from a visit of raiders, and besides that ——"

"Oh, Grandma! I had to! What would Mrs. Tirrell have done if those men had taken her sheep and burned her house!" exclaimed June, who believed that her grandmother was about to blame her for interfering with British plans. "And if he told you that I helped rescue Kirke and Mundy, why, what else could I do? They had taken care of me when I was lost, and carried me to Mrs. Tirrell. They were my friends, I had to help them," June eagerly explained, looking at her grandmother with so anxious an expression that Mrs. Armstrong hastened to say:

"Why, my dear child! Do you think I am blaming you for your courageous conduct? I am trying to tell you how proud I am to have such a granddaughter. 'Tis little to be wondered at that Americans were successful in this war when even little maids like you could prove their loyalty and courage."

If June had been pleased and proud at General Greene's words of approval, and by the kindness of General Moultrie, it was as nothing

compared to her delight in praise from her Tory grandmother.

Clasping her arm about Mrs. Armstrong's neck, she kissed her smooth cheek, saying:

"Oh, Grandma! Let me tell you about Marty's cake! The one that disappeared! I took it, and covered it with yellow roses, and carried it to the prisoners in the Provost," and, perched on the arm of her grandmother's chair, June told the complete story of her adventures that had started with "Marty's fine cake."

And Mrs. Armstrong listened with nods and approving smiles and exclamations. And when Roselinda came to tell them that luncheon was ready, the valiant little "rebel," and the elderly "Tory" went down the stairs hand in hand, both rejoicing that America and England were once more at peace.

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